

On Top Of The News Email: news@arubatoday.com website: www.arubatoday.com Tel: +297 582-7800 Saturday, February 8, 2014



The Olympic flame is lit as colorful fireworks are launched during the grand opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014. (AP Photo/Bernat Armangue)

Russia Kicks Off Sochi Games With Hope And Hubris

Russia Kicks Off Sochi Games With Hope And Hubris

ANGELA CHARLTON
NATALIYA VASILYEVA
Associated Press

SOCHI, Russia (AP) — A Russia in search of global vindication kicked off the Sochi Olympics looking more like a Russia that likes to party, with a pulse-raising opening ceremony about fun and sports instead of terrorism, coddling despots and gay rights.

And that's just the way Vladimir Putin wants these Winter Games to be.

The world's premier athletes on ice and snow have more to worry about than geopolitics as they plunge into the biggest challenges of their lives on the mountain slopes of the Caucasus and in the wet-paint-fresh arenas on the shores of the Black Sea.

But watch out for those Russians on their home turf. A raucous group of Russian athletes had a message for their nearly 3,000 rivals in Sochi, marching through Fisht Stadium singing that they're "not gonna get us!" Superlatives abounded and the mood soared as Tchaikovsky met pseudo-lesbian pop duo Tatu. Russian TV presenter Yana Churikova shouted: "Welcome to the center of the universe!"

Yet no amount of cheering could drown out the real world.

Fears of terrorism, which have dogged these games since Putin won them amid controversy seven years ago, were stoked during the ceremony itself. A passenger aboard a flight bound for Istanbul said there was a bomb on board and tried to divert the plane to Sochi. Authorities said the plane landed safely in Turkey.

The show opened with an embarrassing hiccup, as one of five snowflakes failed to unfurl as planned into the Olympic rings, forcing organizers to jettison a fireworks display and disrupting one of the most symbolic moments in an opening ceremony.

Also missing from the show: Putin's repression of dissent, and inconsistent security measures at the Olympics, which will take place just a few hundred miles (kilometers) away from the sites of a long-running insurgency and routine militant violence.

And the poorly paid migrant workers who helped build up the Sochi site from scratch, the disregard for local residents, the environmental abuse during construction, the pressure on activists, and the huge amounts of Sochi construction money that disappeared to corruption.

Some world leaders pur-



Irina Rodnina and Vladislav Tretiak light the Olympic cauldron during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014.

(AP Photo/Matt Slocum, Pool)

posely stayed away, but U.N. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon and dozens of others were in Sochi for the ceremony. He didn't mention the very real anger over a Russian law banning gay "propaganda" aimed at minors that is being used to discriminate against gay people.

But IOC President Thomas Bach won cheers for addressing it Friday, telling the

crowd it's possible to hold Olympics "with tolerance and without any form of discrimination for whatever reason."

For all the criticism, there was no shortage of pride at the ceremony in what Russia has achieved with these games. The head of the Sochi organizing committee, Dmitry Chernyshenko, captured the mood of many Russians present when he said, "We're now at the heart of that dream that became reality."

"The games in Sochi are our chance to show the whole world the best of what Russia is proud of," he said. "Our hospitality, our achievements, our Russia!" The ceremony presented Putin's version of today's Russia: a country with a rich and complex history emerging confidently from a rocky two decades and now capable of putting on a major international sports event.

Putin himself was front and center, declaring the games open from his box high above the stadium floor. Earlier, he looked down as the real stars of the games — those athletes, dressed in winter wear of so many national colors to

ward off the evening chill and a light dusting of man-made snow — walked onto a satellite image of the earth projected on the floor, the map shifting so the athletes appeared to emerge from their own country.

As always, Greece — the birthplace of Olympic competition — came first in the parade of nations. Five new teams, all from warm weather climates, joined the Winter Olympics for the first time. Togo's flagbearer looked dumbstruck with wonder, but those veterans from the Cayman Islands had the style to arrive in shorts!

The smallest teams often earned the biggest cheers from the crowd of 40,000, with an enthusiastic three-person Venezuelan team winning roars of approval as flag bearer and alpine skier Antonio Pardo danced and jumped along to the electronic music.

Only neighboring Ukraine, scene of a tense and ongoing standoff between a pro-Russian president and Western-leaning protesters, could compete with those cheers.

That is, until the Russians arrived. □



The United States team arrives during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014.

(AP Photo/Patrick Semansky)

US creates new \$17.2T debt limit

WASHINGTON (AP) — The U.S. government got a new borrowing cap Friday, almost four months after Washington defused October's government shut-down and debt crisis.

Once finalized, the new cap on borrowing is expected to be about \$17.2 trillion. It means Treasury Secretary Jacob Lew will have to employ bookkeeping maneuvers to keep the government functioning until Congress further raises the borrowing limit.

Lew warns he has less maneuvering room now than he had last year, when such "extraordinary measures" bought five months of time for the government to keep borrowing while at the previous \$16.7 trillion debt ceiling.

Lawmakers temporarily suspended the borrowing limit last October in the agreement to end the shutdown. It will be reset at the total amount of debt at close of business on Friday.

Treasury's first step to create borrowing room under the new cap is to temporarily suspend sales of U.S. Treasury securities to state and local governments. That started Friday at noon. Lew says Congress must act by the end of the month to avert any possibility of a first-ever, economy-rattling default on U.S. obligations. Raising the limit is needed so that the government, which ran a \$680 billion deficit last year, can borrow enough to pay all its bills, including Social Security benefits, interest payments on the accumulated debt and government salaries, among others. After last year's 16-day shutdown and accompanying debt battle, Republicans controlling the House are no longer interested in a big fight with President Barack Obama over raising the borrowing cap. Obama knuckled under Republicans' demands in 2011 to pair a \$2.1 trillion increase in the debt limit with an equal amount in spending cuts. □

Noting agriculture's growth, Obama signs farm bill

MICHAEL D. SHEAR

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EAST LANSING, Mich.

President Barack Obama signed the \$956 billion farm bill Friday as he traveled to Michigan State University.

greeted by the mayor of East Lansing. The White House press secretary, Jay Carney, said that about 50 lawmakers - including many Republicans - had been invited to the bill

nounce five regional forums on rural exports and an "investing in rural America" conference. He will also direct the White House Rural Council to host sessions in all 50 states to train

ture is thriving."

The report says that farm income is expected to total \$131 billion in 2013, a 46 percent increase since 2008. Most of the increase is attributed to improved



President Barack Obama signs the Agriculture Act of 2014 at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Mich., Feb. 7, 2014. Congress passed the \$956 billion farm bill this week after years of bitter arguments over both subsidies for farmers and the food stamp program. From left: Sen. Carl Levin (D-Mich.), Sen. Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) Sen. Debbie Stabenow (D-Mich.), Sen. Amy Klobuchar (D-Minn.), Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack, Rep. Marcia Fudge (D-Ohio), Rep. Gary Peters, (D-Mich.) and Rep. Dan Kildee (D-Mich.). (Gabriella Demczuk/The New York Times)

sity to extol the benefits of a thriving agricultural sector for the nation's overall economy.

Lawmakers passed the sprawling legislation this week after four years of arguments over farming subsidies and Republican efforts to reduce financing for food stamps. The final bill replaces direct crop payments with an insurance program and trims \$8 billion from food stamps over the next decade - far less than the \$40 billion cut some Republicans had called for.

Obama plans to sign the bill, the Agriculture Act of 2014, into law at Michigan State's equine performance center. Some locals call Michigan State - known for its dairy program - "Moo U," and Michigan has one of the nation's largest and most diverse farming economies.

The president arrived with several Democratic lawmakers and Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack on Air Force One just after noon Friday and was

signing, but that no Republicans had accepted the invitation.

Those aboard included Sens. Patrick J. Leahy, D-Vt., and Amy Klobuchar, D-Minn., and Democrats Debbie Stabenow and Carl Levin of Michigan. Also on board were Reps. Marcia L. Fudge, D-Ohio, and Dan Kildee, D-Mich.

"Everyone invited has to speak for himself or herself about their decision to attend or not attend," Carney told reporters. "Look, this was a bipartisan effort and everyone involved in it deserves credit. The president is happy to share credit for that. The members that are on board today were deeply involved in helping this come about and the president is very glad to have them join him."

In his remarks, Obama will announce a new "Made in Rural America" initiative that White House officials said was intended to help rural businesses market their goods abroad.

The president will an-

Department of Agriculture staff members on how to promote rural exports.

White House officials said the president would also take the opportunity to highlight growth in the farming economy during the last five years, and to note how agriculture has contributed to the economic recovery.

The White House released a report Friday from Obama's Council of Economic Advisers that says farm income has risen significantly since the president took office in the depths of the recession.

"The past five years represents one of the strongest periods in our nation's farm economy," the report notes. "Not only does American agriculture put food on the table of American families at affordable prices and provide raw material for a range of vital purposes, it also supports 1 out of every 12 jobs in the economy. The hard work done on the farm is felt throughout our economy, particularly when agricul-

productivity, and the report notes that the values of livestock and crops are rising. One of the most controversial elements of the farm bill was the elimination of \$5 billion in direct subsidies to farmers for their crops, whether they grew them or not. The subsidies were replaced by an insurance program that will help farmers only when they need it.

Arguments over the food stamp program were also intense. Republicans had argued for even bigger cuts, saying that the program is wasteful and contributes to the deficit.

White House officials said Obama would also talk about how the farm bill will help farmers sell their goods overseas by encouraging exports of pork, almonds, fish, fresh fruit and other products.

And he will note that the legislation includes non-agricultural provisions that are aimed at helping the economies of rural areas in ways that are not directly connected to farming. □



2 men charged in theft of \$5M Stradivarius violin

MILWAUKEE (AP) — A one-time art thief charged with stealing a multimillion-dollar violin once told an acquaintance that type of robbery was his dream crime because of the instrument's value and the ease of grabbing it from a musician walking down the street, according to court documents. Salah Salahadyn, 41, was charged Friday in the Jan-

uary theft of a Stradivarius violin taken from a concertmaster as he got into his car after a performance in Milwaukee.

Salahadyn and 36-year-old Universal Knowledge Allah have each been charged with party to robbery. Salahadyn was previously identified as Salah Jones.

Police found the 300-year-old violin, valued at \$5 million, late Wednesday night

in a suitcase in the attic of a Milwaukee home belonging to one of Salahadyn's acquaintances. Police said the homeowner did not know what was in the suitcase, and they said the violin was in good condition.

The violin had been grabbed Jan. 27 from Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra concertmaster Frank Almond as he left a



Photos show Salah Jones, 41 (left), and Universal Knowledge Allah, 36 (right), of Milwaukee. Jones and Allah were charged Friday, Feb. 7, 2014 with being a party to robbery in the theft of a Stradivarius violin taken from a Milwaukee concertmaster. Police found the 300-year-old violin, valued at \$5 million, in good condition late Wednesday night in a suitcase in the attic of a Milwaukee home.

(AP Photo/Milwaukee CSO)

performance at Wisconsin Lutheran College.

The instrument was built in 1715 by renowned Italian luthier Antonio Stradivari. Experts estimate 600 to 650 Stradivarius instruments remain — about half of what the master produced.

According to a criminal complaint,

Almond told investigators he saw a maroon van parked next to his vehicle as he approached. As he opened a rear door to put the violin inside, a man walked up and shocked him with a stun gun. Almond, struck on the wrist and chest, fell to the ground.

Police who responded found small particles of paper on the ground. The confetti emitted by the stun gun contained serial numbers that allowed officers to trace the weapon to Allah.

Another person contacted police and told them that Salahadyn had spoken about the ease of stealing high-end art from unsuspecting people.

"Salahadyn explained that his dream theft was a

Stradivarius violin because of its potential value and the fact that it could be snatched from the hands of a musician as they walk down the street," the complaint said.

Salahadyn had previously been convicted of stealing a \$25,000 statue from a Milwaukee art gallery in 1995 and later trying to sell it back to the same dealer. "Theoretically, that might have been his plan here," Police Chief Ed Flynn said during a Thursday news conference.

The two men were arrested Monday but not charged until Friday. Milwaukee District Attorney John Chisholm said previously that charges had been delayed while prosecutors negotiated for the return of the violin.

Court Commissioner Katharine Kucharski ordered cash bail of \$10,000 for Salahadyn and \$500 for Allah. She noted Salahadyn's lengthy criminal record, including bail jumping, and Allah's clean record.

The violin's owner had loaned the instrument to Almond. □

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Reports: NSA gets under 30 percent of US phone data

STEPHEN BRAUN
Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — The National Security Agency collects less than 30 percent of calling data from Americans despite the agency's massive daily efforts to sweep up the bulk of U.S. phone records, two U.S. newspapers reported Friday.

Citing anonymous officials and sources, The Washington Post and The Wall Street Journal both said the NSA's phone data collection has had a steep drop-off since 2006. According to the newspapers, the government has been unable to keep pace since then with a national surge in cellphone usage and dwindling landline use by American consumers.

The Post said the NSA takes in less than 30 percent of all call data; the Journal said it is about or less than 20 percent. In either case, the figures are far below the amount of phone data collected in 2006, when the government extracted nearly all of U.S. calling records, both newspapers reported. NSA officials intend to press for court authorization to broaden their coverage of cellphone providers to return the government to near-total coverage of Americans' calling data, the newspapers said.

The lowered estimates for the sweep of government surveillance would be significant because federal judges, members of government task forces and media accounts based on documents provided by NSA leaker Edward Snowden have all described the NSA's bulk metadata collection as sweeping in millions of records from American phone users. Lowered estimates could be cited by officials to alleviate privacy and civil liberties fears, but they could also raise questions about the government's rationale for the program — that the NSA's use of all Americans' phone records are critical in preventing potential terrorist plots.

National security officials have said that the collection of bulk data is essential to national security because it provides a massive pool of calling records and other metadata that NSA analysts can quickly search to pinpoint calling patterns showing evidence of potential terror threats. Congressional critics have pressed efforts to end the bulk phone data sweeps, and two panels of experts have urged President Barack Obama to end the program because they see little counter-terrorism advantages and say the program intrudes on personal liberties.

Obama has committed to ending government storage of phone records but still wants the NSA to have full access to the data. National security officials did not immediately comment on the new reports.

Civil liberties groups said they were not reassured by the reports, saying the government still intends to gather phone records from all American users. "To accept their legal reasoning is to accept that they will eventually collect everything, even if they're not doing so already," said Jameel Jaffer, deputy legal director for the American Civil Liberties Union.

Verizon and AT&T said last December that they would provide figures this year on data requested by the government in law enforcement and intelligence investigations. But the Journal reported last year that several major cellphone entities including Verizon Wireless and T-Mobile were not part of the NSA's bulk metadata collection. It is not clear why cellphone providers would not be covered by the NSA legal authority. □

Officers testify in shooting over loud music

DEREK KINNER
Associated Press
JACKSONVILLE, Florida (AP) — Police officers testified Friday that a teen died almost immediately after a Florida man fired repeat-

merman fatally shot Trayvon Martin, an unarmed black teen, in Sanford in 2012. Zimmerman, a Hispanic, was acquitted of second-degree murder in July 2013.

SUV. Blood was coming out of the back of the teen, Holmes said.

Michael Dunn, 47, is on trial for Davis' death. He is pleading not guilty and says he shot Davis in self-defense.

Davis' friend, Tevin Thompson, who was sitting in the front passenger seat at the time of the shooting, testified that he and his friends were playing music loudly in their SUV while they waited for another friend to make a purchase inside the convenience store.

Dunn pulled into the parking space next to theirs, so close that it would have been impossible to open the driver's door, Thompson said.

Dunn seemed upset and shouted to them to "turn your music down. I can't hear myself think," Thompson said.

During opening statements Thursday, prosecutor John Guy told jurors that Davis posed no threat to Dunn and that there was no weapon in Davis' vehicle. "Jordan Davis was upset, no doubt. He was cussing, no doubt. □



Shawn Atkins, currently in prison on theft charges, testifies in the trial of Michael Dunn in Jacksonville, Fla., Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014. Atkins provided an eye witness account and the license tag of Dunn's car to police. Dunn is accused in the shooting death of Jordan Davis, who was outside a store with friends in November 2012.

(AP Photo/Bob Mack)

edly into his vehicle following an argument over loud music outside a convenience store.

The case echoes a trial that received wide attention and happened only two hours away. George Zim-

In Thursday's testimony, officers Robert Holmes and Dawn Valentine of the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office said they found 17-year-old Jordan Davis slumped against another young man in the backseat of the

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As propane prices rise, worries grow for millions of Americans

ALAN BLINDER
CLIFFORD KRAUSS
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News Service

Alan Blinder reported from Eastaboga, Ala., and Clifford Krauss from Houston. Christina Capocchi contributed reporting from St. Paul, Minn., and Ryan, Iowa, and Michael Avok from Madison, Neb.

EASTABOGA, Ala. - In the midst of one of the great natural gas drilling booms in U.S. history, millions of Americans are struggling with a mystifying problem that is chilling their bones. There is not enough propane, a byproduct of natural gas production and crude oil refining, to heat their homes and keep their farms running. Even while production of the fuel is up 15 percent over a year ago, inventories are now nearly 50 percent lower than last winter and millions of Southerners and Midwesterners who depend on the fuel are angry and confused.

In North and South Dakota, the shortage has become so acute that the Standing Rock Sioux Tribe has

opened shelters to serve its population, most of whom rely on propane. Several states have moved to help ease delivery problems, and a number of attorneys general have called for investigations into price gouging.

"It's not a good subject right now," said John Flanagan, a retired truck driver who uses propane to heat his home in Iowa, where the federal government said the price of a gallon had increased by nearly \$2 since November. "Everybody you talk to, they're just devastated. They're disgusted by the whole situation."

Hundreds of miles to the southeast, at the Del-Ray Ranch here in Calhoun County, Ala., the concerns were just as intense in the state's \$15-billion-a-year chicken business. Ray Bean began his week with the realization that the propane supply that helps him and his wife to raise more than 500,000 chickens a year had dwindled to zero.

"You know that within four or five hours, if that temperature starts to fall, those



Ken Snider, who drives a propane truck, fills a tank outside a home on the Standing Rock Reservation in Fort Yates, N.D. Snider said the price of propane on the reservation this winter peaked at \$4.65 a gallon, which is more than doubling of the fuel's cost has crippled efforts to stay warm - and alive - through the harsh winter where most people rely on propane to heat their often ramshackle homes.

(AP Photo/Kevin Cederstrom)

birds are going to pile up against the walls to try to maintain body heat," said Bean, whose farm quickly received an emergency delivery, but only for 20 percent of normal capacity. "You know what's going to happen."

Energy experts are also struggling for answers about why the propane delivery system of supply truckers and pipelines broke down so badly for the rural homeowners who depend on them for portable electrical generation and home heating.

The experts point out that propane production has been soaring in recent years, leading to some record monthly surpluses. Demand had been steady until this winter, opening the way to profitable exports for energy companies. But like diesel, gasoline and other fuels, propane is not customarily stored in great

amounts at local levels, and so localized shortages are always possible.

"You don't design church for Easter Sunday," said Clifton Linton, a natural gas liquids specialist at Oil Price Information Service, a consultancy. Still, he added, the problem is one of logistics rather than production. The higher price for propane is the consequence of three principal factors, according to experts, including the onslaught of frigid temperatures over the past two months that has led to a surge of demand.

The insufficient propane inventories have also been caused by five times more propane being used to dry corn in recent months than normal because of a bumper crop of wet corn at the end of last year - the result of excessive rains at the end of the growing season. Meanwhile U.S. propane

exports exceeded 400,000 barrels a day for the first time in October, according to a recent report by the consultancy RBN Energy, helped along by booming domestic production and the completion of several port dock expansions. Propane exports have been steadily rising from just more than 150,000 barrels a day in January 2012.

Although prices have moderated slightly in recent days, the Energy Department reported this week that residential propane was selling for an average of \$3.89 a gallon, up from \$2.31 at the same time last year.

State officials, increasingly alarmed as costs have climbed higher, have been spurred to action.

In addition to the mainstay warnings by attorneys general against price gouging in times of crisis, at least 20 states have declared emergencies or suspended certain transportation regulations as they try to cope.

Some states are opting for - or are at least weighing - more aggressive tactics.

Indiana lawmakers are considering a plan that would allow consumers to avoid sales taxes on bulk propane purchases when prices rise past \$2.50 a gallon, while a legislative committee in Missouri voted this week to support a resolution seeking a federal investigation into the price increases.

The energy and transportation industries have struggled to respond to the crisis. Last month, during the worst of the cold, pipeline companies seeking to stretch their supplies restricted the amount of propane that private distributors could buy to no more than their contracted amounts.

But there are also signs that the industry's answer could soon become more forceful. Oneok, the pipeline giant, told federal regulators last week that it could reverse the flow of a propane pipeline to bolster supplies at a Kansas storage hub with supplies from Oklahoma. □



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US Financial Front:

Weak American jobs report still gives cause for hope

C. S. RUGABER
PAUL WISEMAN

AP Economics Writers

WASHINGTON (AP) — For a second straight month, weak job growth has raised concern that the U.S. economy has lost the vigor it showed late last year.

A tepid gain of 113,000 jobs in January followed December's puny increase of 75,000 — far below last year's average monthly gain of 194,000.

Yet the jobs report the government issued Friday offered cause for optimism. Solid hiring last month in areas like manufacturing and construction point to underlying strength.

And in a healthy sign, more Americans began looking for jobs in January. A sizable 115,000 formerly unemployed people also said they found jobs. Their hiring reduced the unemployment rate to 6.6 percent, the lowest in more than five years.

Most economists say they think hiring will strengthen during 2014 as the economy improves further.

Job growth "clearly has downshifted over the past two months," said Doug Handler, chief U.S. economist at IHS Global Insight. "But we still believe the economic fundamentals remain strong and ... forecast an acceleration of growth later in the year."

Janet Yellen will be pressed about the job market and the economy when she testifies to Congress next week in her first public comments since becoming

ing Federal Reserve chair on Feb. 1. Fed officials are scaling back their stimulus for the economy. They have also said they would consider raising their benchmark short-term interest rate at some point after the rate falls below 6.5 percent.

But the Fed hasn't been clear about the timing. With the unemployment rate now close to that threshold, economists think the Fed may update its guidance after its next meeting in March.

Friday's jobs data suggest that the U.S. economy may slow in the first few months of the year from its robust 3.7 percent annual pace in the second half of 2013. The hiring figures follow other signs of a possibly softening economy. A survey of manufacturing firms showed that factory expansion slowed last month. A measure of forthcoming home sales fell.

The jobs report offered some hints that hiring could return to last year's healthier levels in coming months. To begin with, the unemployment rate is at its lowest point since October 2008, just as the financial crisis was erupting. The rate fell because many of the unemployed found work. And the influx of people seeking jobs — a sign of optimism — was an improvement from December. In that month, the unemployment rate fell only because about 350,000 people stopped looking for work and were no longer counted as unemployed.

Another positive sign: Manufacturers, construction firms and mines added a combined 76,000 jobs last month — the most since

And despite recent turmoil in several emerging economies, the global economy appears in better shape than it has been in the past

three years, when Europe's financial crisis threatened U.S. growth.

"There's nothing really holding growth back," said Paul Ashworth, an economist at Capital Economics. Most economists expect the U.S. economy to expand 2.5 percent to 3 percent this year, up from 1.9 percent in 2013.

Several industries shed jobs last month, but the losses were likely temporary. Retailers cut nearly 13,000 jobs, but that followed three months of huge gains.

And government jobs dropped by 29,000. Local governments shed 11,000 jobs, partly because bus drivers and cafeteria workers were temporarily laid off when winter weather closed schools. The federal government cut 12,000, including 8,500 at the U.S. Postal Service. □



Neal Breen, 21, works at the Ashburn Bagel & Sandwich Shop in Ashburn, Va. Breen, who quit college a year earlier with hopes of saving money to start his own business, is keenly aware that the wealth in the neighborhoods where he delivers breakfast sandwiches is, for now, beyond reach. But he does not decry the gap between the Vienna sausage dinners of childhood and the \$168,000 median income of the households surrounding this shopping center, about 35 miles from Capitol Hill. It just confirms that the free-market economy is working, he says, by rewarding those who do for themselves.

(AP Photo/Adam Geller)

January 2006. Goods-producing employers like those tend to hire only when they're confident in the economy.

"You rarely see expansions in these industries without the economy being in fairly healthy shape," said Gary Burtless, an economist at the Brookings Institution. Home sales and construction are rising, a trend economists expect to continue. If it does, more construction jobs should lead to more retail spending as people furnish homes.

The effect of government tax increases and spending cuts, which dragged on growth last year, should sharply diminish in 2014.



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Artisanal Movement Reaches The US Food Court Scene



This photo shows fish on display for sale at Eataly's in New York. The spate of new "food halls" in the U.S. caters to the country's emerging culinary sophistication.

(AP Photo/Charles Sykes)

MICHELE KAYAL
Associated Press

In Singapore's equivalent of food courts, hawkers sell steaming bowls of noodles, giant crabs in pepper sauce and slices of pungent durian. In Barcelona, patrons at the La Boqueria nibble finely aged ham and buy fresh produce to prepare at home. In the United States? Historically, it's been a wasteland of spongy pretzels, giant sodas, greasy fried rice and endless burgers.

But that was Food Court 1.0. Recently, shoppers from New York to Seattle have witnessed a reboot of the food court experience, as sumptuous farmers markets-slash-gourmet eateries become increasingly common.

"They're exciting, delicious, affordable, democratic places to eat," says Stephen Werther, the chief executive officer of Wink Retail Group, which has partnered with food personality Anthony Bourdain to create a New York food hall — today's preferred nomenclature — featuring dishes from around the world. "It's really just America catching up with some of the wonderful ways the

rest of the world eats."

Bourdain joins other name-brand chefs such as Todd English, who opened a food hall in New York's Plaza Hotel in 2010 and Mario Batali, whose Italian-themed Eataly, now in New York and Chicago, may be the best known of the country's food halls.

"In history, markets and collective food areas have been around forever," says Sam Oches, editor of QSR Magazine, which covers the quick service and fast-casual dining industry. "What Mario Batali and Anthony Bourdain are doing is to brand it and make it something that's a little bit bigger in terms of its scale and its exposure."

And that has paved the way for others, Oches says. In Washington, D.C., retail developer Edens revived a vintage venue to create Union Market, a 40-artisan food hall that is just over a year old. In Seattle, a high-end "shellfish deli" and other local vendors reside in Melrose Market, a four-year-old project housed in a renovated auto garage that smacks of cool. In Chicago, the French Market brings together more than 30 vendors, from a crepe

shop to a kosher deli and a bakery from Top Chef veteran Stephanie Izard.

"Customers really want authenticity, they want the story behind the food," Oches says. "With customers wanting to connect to the food, taking this old model of a market goes a long way."

A market can tell a lot of different stories."

Markets, of course, have been around for decades, even in the United States. Venues such as Seattle's Pike Place Market and North Market in Columbus, Ohio have long attracted tourists. And of course there is San Francisco's Ferry Building Marketplace, a farmers market and collection of high-end purveyors such as Recchiuti Confections and Cowgirl Creamery that opened in 2003.

But for most Americans, the food hall experience

has mostly been limited to the mall food court, a pale imitation of what the rest of the world has long enjoyed.

The spate of new options caters to America's emerging culinary sophistication. When market operator Sebastien Bensidoun opened his first market in a Chicago suburb 16 years ago, he says it nearly failed. But when he launched Chicago French Market in the West Loop in 2009, the country was ready, says Bensidoun, whose family is the largest operator of markets in and around Paris.

"People are cooking much more than they used to be," says Bensidoun, who now operates 16 markets in the Chicago area. "You can see the young generation coming to the market. In 1997 that was not the case. People were not buying as they are now."

Bensidoun says he often receives calls from other regions asking him to come open a market. Recent interest, he says, has come from cities in Florida, California and Texas.

His next project, he says, will be to open a food hall in New York City.

Difficult economic times also have fostered the trend of multiple independent vendors in a communal space. At the same time large retailers have been reluctant to take on new spaces, smaller merchants have seen an opportunity to share rent, utilities and other costs. The growth of Internet shopping, some say, also has supported the trend toward food halls.

"Food and beverage venues can afford to pay the rent in renovated buildings like ours or in new buildings versus retailers that are getting squeezed by the Internet and the big box stores," says Scott Shapiro, co-developer of Seattle's Melrose Market. "Looking at it from a landlord's perspective, our tenants are people who can have a sustainable business. It tends to be more food and beverage focused." □



Customers stand in line for bread at Eataly's grand opening in New York.

(AP Photo/Charles Sykes)

Official: Turkish plane hijacking drama 'has ended'

SUZAN FRASER
Associated Press

ANKARA, Turkey (AP) — Turkish security forces on Friday detained a Ukrainian plane passenger suspected of making a bomb

reporters at Sabiha Gokcen airport. The man was slightly injured during the struggle, but no weapons were used, he said. The man did not have a bomb on him, he said.

The hijacking drama came as the Winter Olympics opened in the Russian resort city, with thousands of athletes from around the world pouring into the tightly secured stadium

and fireworks shooting into the sky.

The Interfax news agency cited the Ukrainian Security Service, the country's main security agency, as saying the passenger who was in a state of severe alcohol intoxication. Mutlu said the man was not drunk, but suggested he may have taken other substances. He did not elaborate.

Habib Soluk, the Turkish Transport Ministry under-secretary, told NTV that the man rose from his seat, shouted that there was bomb on board and tried to enter the locked cockpit.

The pilot signaled that there was a hijack attempt and the airport was placed on high alert.

"The man was made to believe the plane was heading to Sochi," Soluk said.

Pegasus Airlines confirmed in a brief statement there was a "bomb threat" aboard their flight from Kharkiv.

The plane's captain, Ilyas Karagulle, signaled that the crew was well, according to state-run TRT

television.

The plane landed at about 6 p.m. Turkish time, just as the opening ceremony for the Olympics was about to begin.

With about 100,000 police, security agents and army troops flooding Sochi, Russia has pledged to ensure "the safest Olympics in history."

But terror fears fueled by recent suicide bombings have left athletes, spectators and officials worldwide jittery about potential threats.

Security experts warn that Islamic militants in the Caucasus, who have threatened to derail the Winter Games that run from Feb. 7-23, could achieve their goal by choosing soft targets away from the Olympic sites or even outside Sochi.

Olympic organizers introduced blanket screening of all visitors, requiring them to share passport details to get a Winter Games spectator pass. Officials also cut access to vehicles lacking Sochi registration or a special pass, and guards were searching all train commuters. □



Turkish private company Pegasus passenger plane at the Sabiha Gokcen Airport in Istanbul, Turkey, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014, after a Ukrainian passenger on board Istanbul-bound flight claimed there was a bomb on board and tried to hijack the plane to Sochi, Russia, where the winter Olympics are kicking off, an official said. All 110 passengers aboard the plane were evacuated "without any problems" after authorities subdued the man who attempted to hijack the Turkish plane to Sochi, Russia.

(AP Photo/Emrah Gurel)

threat in an attempt to hijack a flight to Sochi, Russia, where the Winter Olympics were opening under tight security.

An F-16 fighter was scrambled as soon as the pilot on the flight from Kharkiv, Ukraine, signaled there was a hijacking attempt and then escorted the plane safely to its original destination in Istanbul, according to NTV television. Authorities snuck onto the plane and subdued the suspected hijacker while the other 109 passengers were being evacuated, Huseyin Avni Mutlu, the Istanbul governor, told

The passengers were evacuated without problems and the "operation has ended," Mutlu said on Twitter.

The man's motive was unclear, but Mutlu said he had "requests concerning his own country" and wanted to relay a "message concerning sporting activities in Sochi."

"We were receiving through various channels information that there could be initiatives to sabotage the spirit of peace arising in Sochi, but we are saddened that such an event took place in our city," Mutlu said.



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Russian official denies role in Nuland call leak

LAURA MILLS

Associated Press

MOSCOW (AP) — A Russian government aide who was among the first to post a video online containing a bugged phone call between two U.S. diplomats denied Friday that he or the government played a role in leaking the recording. Dmitry Loskutov said he was surfing a social networking website on Thursday when he came across the video, in which the top U.S. diplomat for Europe, Victoria Nuland, disparages the European Union. Loskutov, an aide to Deputy Prime Minister Dmitry Rogozin, told The Associated Press in a telephone interview that his decision to repost the video had no connection to his work for the Russian government. White House spokesman Jay Carney said Thursday that Loskutov's post pointed to Moscow's possible involvement. U.S. State Department spokeswoman Jen Psaki said the video was "a new low in Russian tradecraft," indirectly suggesting that Russia was responsible for bugging the call.

Loskutov posted a link on Twitter which he said proved that another anonymous user had posted the video on Wednesday, the day before he did. "I think you're better off asking the titushki (about the origins of the video)," he said, using the word that Ukrainian protest-

ers have used to describe violent, government-paid thugs who are meant to delegitimize the protest movement.

The AP verified that the post cited by Loskutov was made on Wednesday, but the sender could not be identified.

Rogozin, Loskutov's boss, was unavailable for comment but posted an in-

longer on Friday morning ahead of a meeting with Ukrainian industrialists.

"Maybe then there will be fewer unemployed and embittered people to organize riots in their own cities with foreign money," Rogozin said.

In the video, voices resembling those of Nuland and the U.S. ambassador to Ukraine discuss inter-

have been camped out in downtown Kiev for almost three months after President Viktor Yanukovich announced he was shelving an association deal with the EU in favor of closer ties with Russia.

During a press conference in Kiev on Friday, Nuland said she would not comment on the video except to say that it was "pretty



Russian Communist Party supporters hold Ukrainian national and red flags during a protest in front of the U.S. Embassy in Moscow, Russia, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014. U.S. officials say they suspect Russia is behind the leak of an apparently bugged phone conversation about Ukraine between two senior American diplomats in which they make disparaging comments about the European Union.

(AP Photo/A. Zemlianichenko)

direct but vociferous response to American accusations online on Friday.

"While the westerners weave little intrigues and get into scandals, Russia is helping the regions of Ukraine restore lost connections with our industries," he wrote on the blogging platform Twit-

national efforts to resolve Ukraine's ongoing political crisis. At one point, the Nuland voice suggests that the EU's position should be ignored. "F--- the EU," the female voice said.

Nuland has been active in U.S. efforts to resolve the crisis in Ukraine, where anti-government protesters

impressive tradecraft," echoing the State Department phrase that suggested Russia's involvement. In Brussels, a spokeswoman for EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso said the EU would not comment on "allegedly intercepted communication as a position of principle." □

Gay rights activists in Russia are arrested

ST. PETERSBURG, Russia (AP)

— Russian police on Friday arrested several gay rights activists protesting in St. Petersburg and Moscow on the opening day of the 2014 Sochi Winter Olympics. In Moscow, police quickly detained 10 gay rights activists who waved rainbow flags Friday on Red Square and attempted to sing a Russian anthem.

One of the demonstrators, Gleb Latnik, said police insulted them and that one officer even spat in the face of an activist. He said he, and other protesters were released a few hours later. Moscow police refused to comment.

In St. Petersburg, four activists were detained Friday after unfurling a banner quoting the Olympic Charter's ban on any form of discrimination. The protesters, who gathered on St. Petersburg's Vasilyevsky Island, were quickly rounded up by police, according to Natalia Tsymbalova, a local lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender activist.

Police there also refused any immediate comment. A Russian law banning gay "propaganda" from reaching minors has drawn strong international criticism and calls for boycott of the Sochi Games from gay activists and others.

Russian law also bans any unsanctioned protests and violators may face fines or prison sentences.

Human Rights First, a rights watchdog based in New York and Washington D.C., quickly condemned the arrests of Russian LGBT activists. "The most alarming thing is, despite the international attention, the authorities are still bringing more charges under the law and it is being applied on a larger scale," spokesman Shawn Gaylord said in a statement.

All Out, the international group that organized events in 20 cities this week to pressure Olympic sponsors to condemn Russia's "gay propaganda" law, also harshly criticized the detentions of activists. □

Toronto mayor wants rainbow protest flag removed

ROB GILLIES

Associated Press

TORONTO (AP) — Toronto Mayor Rob Ford wants to remove a rainbow flag at City Hall that protests Russia's law restricting gay-rights activities, and he hoisted a Canadian flag in his office window in response on Friday. Some city halls across Canada raised the rainbow flag as the opening ceremonies for the Winter Olympics began in Sochi, Russia. "It's not about someone's sexual preference," Ford said. "I do not agree with putting up the

rainbow flag. We should put our Canadian flag up." City spokeswoman Jackie DeSouza said the city's chief of protocol approved flying the rainbow flag for the next two weeks after a local community center requested it. DeSouza said the mayor has not made a request to city staff to take it down. Deputy Mayor Norm Kelly said flying the rainbow flag is a sign of solidarity.

Others in Toronto have taken up the cause. The Toronto-based Canadian Institute for Diversity and Inclusion, a nonprofit that

works to improve diversity in the workplace, released a satirical video on YouTube featuring a two-man luge team rhythmically taking flight in slow motion, set to the 1980s hit "Don't You Want Me." It ends with the words on screen, "The Games have always been a little gay. Let's fight to keep them that way."

The mayor of Canada's largest city has made international headlines for his erratic behavior after acknowledging last year that he had smoked crack cocaine while in a drunken stupor. He has resisted

pressure to step down and is seeking re-election, though the city council has stripped him of much of his powers. His erratic behavior has embarrassed many Canadians. Earlier this week, Ford said he would never attend the city's annual gay pride parade and said, "I'm not going to change the way I am."

Some criticized his comments as homophobic. He has previously said he skipped the June event because he faithfully attends a family cottage on the weekend of Canada's birthday. □

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Syria will continue participation in Geneva Talks

BEN HUBBARD

© 2014 New York Times

ISTANBUL - The Syrian government said Friday that it would continue to participate in the Geneva talks aimed at ending the country's civil war, as civilians trapped in a rebel-controlled part of Homs waited to see if a deal to allow them to leave would be carried out.

In a statement to Syrian state news media, Faisal Mekdad, the deputy foreign minister, said that the government's delegation would return to Geneva for the resumption of talks with the exile opposition on Monday.

The first round of the talks, which are backed by the United Nations and a number of countries including the United States and Russia, concluded last week without tangible progress toward stopping the war that has killed more than 130,000 people and created millions of refugees.

The United States and the opposition coalition insist that the goal of the talks is to get the sides to agree on the members of a "transitional governing body" to run the country, as is called for in the U.N. communiqué outlining the talks.

The Syrian government, however, has insisted that the talks focus on fighting terrorism. While Islamists and extremists, including one al-Qaida affiliate, have risen to prominence among the rebel forces inside the country, the government dismisses all resistance to its rule as "terrorism."

In announcing the govern-

ment's participation, Mekdad said its delegation was willing to discuss the communiqué "article by article" and that the talks should seek to "protect the lives of Syrians and stop the bloodshed by the armed terrorist

groups and their regional and international supporters."

Officials involved in the talks acknowledge that the possibility of an imminent breakthrough in the talks is low, largely because there

are few levers that President Bashar Assad's opponents can use to force his government to surrender power.

Assad's military has a firm grip on the capital and much of the country's cen-

ter, while rebel forces lack unity and have become increasingly bogged down in clashes with an extremist group that has grown in their midst.

The Syrian government has also questioned the opposition's ability to deliver any deal that might be reached. The government says the opposition delegation lacks control over the fighting forces inside Syria and represents only a slice of the anti-Assad groups outside the country. Western officials have suggested that getting the parties to talk could lead to other benefits, like local cease-fires or increased access for humanitarian aid.

On Friday, residents of a besieged area of the central city of Homs were waiting to see whether an agreement between the government and the United Nations to let some civilians leave and aid to be delivered would be carried out. □



Anti-Syrian regime protesters carry a banner during a demonstration at Kafr Nabil town in Idlib province, northern Syria, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014. The Syrian government announced it will take part in a second round of peace talks in Geneva on Monday. The first face-to-face U.N.-hosted talks adjourned on Jan. 31. The Arabic in the background reads, "Kafr Nabil," the name of the town.

(AP Photo/Edlib News Network ENN)

Violent anti-govt protests spread across Bosnia

AIDA CERKEZ

Associated Press

SARAJEVO, Bosnia-Herzegovina (AP) — Anti-government protesters stormed

into the Bosnian presidency and another government building in Sarajevo and set them ablaze Friday as riot police fired tear gas in a desperate attempt to stop them. Smoke was rising from several Bosnian cities as thousands vented their fury over the Balkan nation's almost 40 percent unemployment and its rampant

corruption. It was the worst social unrest the country has seen since the 1992-95 war that killed over 100,000 people following Yugoslavia's dissolution.

As night was falling Friday, downtown Sarajevo was in chaos, with buildings and cars burning and riot police in full gear chasing protesters and pounding batons against their shields to get the crowd to disperse.

Nearly 200 people were injured throughout the country in clashes with police,

medical workers reported. Bosnians have many reasons to be unhappy as general elections approach in October. The privatization that followed the war decimated the middle class and sent the working class into poverty as a few tycoons flourished. Corruption is widespread and high taxes for the country's bloated public sector eat away at residents' paychecks.

In the northern city of Tuzla, protesters stormed the lo-

cal government building, throwing furniture and files out its windows Friday before setting it on fire. The local government resigned. By evening, protesters also burned the city's court building.

Protesters also set upon local government buildings in Zenica, Mostar and Travnik. The crowd in Zenica pushed several cars belonging to local officials into the nearby river and city authorities announced they will resign. □

Puerto Rico's church abuse allegations to be examined

DANICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Prosecutors in Puerto Rico are investigating six priests who face sex abuse allegations and have been expelled by church authorities from a diocese in one of the island's north coastal towns.

Government prosecutor Yolanda Pitino said Friday that she and other attorneys are interviewing several people who have accused the priests of sodomy, lewd acts and sexual harassment.

"We are not satisfied with the information that the church gave us," Pitino said in a phone interview, adding that the diocese has not responded to requests for more information.

The Diocese of Arecibo said in a statement that it is working with authorities and sharing information about the six priests that Bishop Daniel Fernandez expelled starting in 2011.

"(We) reiterate our policy of zero tolerance against child abuse," the diocese stated.

Fernandez did not return a message for comment.

The case has caught the attention of officials with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement's Homeland Security Investigations, who have requested information from the island's justice department, according to a person familiar with the matter who was not authorized to speak publicly about it.

Complicating the investigation is a separate sex abuse allegation that surfaced against Fernandez himself, which he has rejected.

"Clearly, it's revenge for the decisions I've taken since the moment I assumed leadership of the diocese, where the situation that I found was not the most positive," Fernandez said in a recent statement. □

Cameron urges Scots to remain in United Kingdom

STEVEN ERLANGER
© 2014 New York Times

LONDON - In an emotional plea, Prime Minister David Cameron of Britain asked Scots on Friday to vote in September to remain within the United Kingdom, saying that without Scotland the country would be "deeply diminished."

"We want you to stay," he said, an entreaty that marked shift from the current pro-union campaign, which has featured dark warnings about financial and legal difficulties for Scotland should the Scots vote for independence. Cameron chose the Olympic Park in east London for his first major intervention in the Scottish referendum campaign, trying to appeal to the national pride that surrounded the highly successful Summer Olympic Games here 18 months ago.

Then, Scots were prominent in what was known as "Team G.B.," for Great Britain, and one of the local heroes of the games, Scottish tennis player Andy Murray, is known to favor remaining within the union. In excerpts from the speech provided to political journalists overnight, Cameron said: "For me, the best thing about the Olympics wasn't the winning. It was the red, the white, the blue. It was the summer that patriotism came out of the shadows and into the sun, everyone cheering as one for Team G.B."

Cameron focused on the importance of the "power-

ful" United Kingdom brand and how much it mattered in the world, and how it could be damaged. Scottish independence would "rip the rug from under our own reputation," Cameron said, arguing that "we matter more in the world together" - the same argu-

promised by the country's ruling Scottish National Party, on Sept. 18. Scots living outside Scotland cannot vote.

Early opinion polls have shown a large plurality of Scots intending to vote to remain inside the union, but the numbers are soft,

which is meant to be non-partisan, is led by Alastair Darling, a Labour member of Parliament from Scotland and former chancellor of the Exchequer, who held Cabinet posts during Labour governments from 1997 to 2010.

Darling and his team have



British Prime Minister David Cameron answers questions from the media after his speech on the importance of Scotland to the UK, at the velodrome in Olympic Park, London, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014. Scotland is to vote on its independence in a referendum in Sept. 2014.

(AP Photo/Sang Tan)

ment used by Britons who want the United Kingdom to remain in the European Union.

The outcome, he said, is still up in the air.

Cameron said that while the decision was up to the Scots, "all 63 million of us" - in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland - "are profoundly affected."

About 4 million people older than 16 and living in Scotland will be able to take part in the referendum,

and in some recent polls, greater numbers have said they intend to vote for independence.

Given the unpopularity of Cameron and his Conservative Party in Scotland, which is dominated by the opposition Labour Party and the Scottish National Party, Cameron has been wary of intervening too much in the debate, fearing a counterproductive effect.

The pro-union campaign,

been emphasizing questions about whether an independent Scotland would have to reapply to join the European Union, whether it could continue to use the pound as its currency or adopt the euro, whether it would have a truly independent central bank, and even whether oil and gas revenues from declining production in the North Sea would be enough to fund Scotland's budget. □

Moody's downgrades Puerto Rico credit rating

DANICA COTO
Associated Press

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico (AP)

— Puerto Rico's credit rating was dealt its second blow in a week when Moody's Investors Service announced Friday it had downgraded the U.S. territory's debt to junk status.

The downgrade of two notches came just days after Standard & Poor's downgraded the island's debt by one notch, prompting the local government to file new legislation aimed at

shoring up the economy as it prepares to re-enter the bond market this month.

Moody's said Puerto Rico's government took strong and aggressive actions to control spending and reduce debt issuance, among other things, but that it remained concerned about its liquidity and ability to access the market.

"While some economic indicators point to a preliminary stabilization, we do not see evidence of

economic growth sufficient to reverse the commonwealth's negative financial trends," the agency said. "Without an economic revival, the commonwealth will face difficult decisions in coming years, as its debt and pension costs rise."

Treasury Secretary Melba Acosta said Puerto Rico has sufficient liquidity through the end of the fiscal year, and she noted the government is still pursuing arrangements for additional liquidity.

"We strongly disagree with Moody's decision, and we will not relent in our plans to strengthen our fiscal situation," she said.

Gov. Alejandro Garcia Padilla said his administration has worked hard to diversify Puerto Rico's economy and grow its industrial base. "The requirements for liquidity, legislative action and economic and budgetary performance have been unequivocally surpassed," he said. □



La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino stages Appreciation Celebration!



EAGLE BEACH - A Carnival spirited appreciation celebration unfolded at La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino in the conference room and spilled over onto

the pool deck, starting with resort associates and sweeping the guests, all repeat visitors and time share owners, into the spontaneous festivity.

The resort staged the appreciation day acknowledging the little things that lend La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino its special flavor and charm beginning with a Best Smile award, a Best Comedian and Actor award, a Best Themed Luncheon award and some heartfelt applause for hard work and dedication.

The festivities culminated with the New Generation Brass Band, which was a big surprise, marching the jubilant resort associates onto the pool deck and

getting guests off their lounge chair to dance and cheer.

Pictured here, dancing into guests hearts, having fun on the job, the ever-creative crew of La Cabana Beach Resort & Casino. □



Lori Marrazzo is the Caribbean Palm Village Resort Carnival Queen



NOORD - In a colorful Queen Election and Coronation, the Caribbean Palm Village Resort elected its Carnival royalty from among four fun-loving candidates, two sets of mother and daughter teams, all of

whom are repeat-guests of the resort and frequent Aruba visitors. Kathleen and Lori Marrazzo from the USA and Maxima Overmaer and Ingrid Van Lacken from Belgium, were presented as queen can-

didates dancing their way into the crowd's heart. The best dancer and most joyful of the four, Lori Marrazzo, won the contest and most cheers. The contest was presided by, no less than the Aruban Carnival Foundation president, Tekla Kelly, and three other local personalities included Nancy Brete or the Aruba Kayak Adventure and Gerla Chayadi who escorts the famed bar hopping bus, the Kukoo Kunuku. Emceed by Farley Croes, the energetic activities coordinator, the crowd consisting of resort guests and the candidates, including two cross-dressing candidates, had a great time! The winner received a crown and a sash, and nicely wrapped gifts including a flower ar-



up, hair and costume requirements. Mislady Fingal of the Activities Department assisted with coaching the queen candidates and preparing them for their public appearances. The Caribbean Palm Village Resort board members Edward Hayes and Dan Maloof joined Interim General Manager Astrid Muller and her crew, Gina Tondou, Daisy Gomez, Nella



rangement and a bottle of champagne. Madeleine's Beauty Salon contributed greatly to creative make-

Geerman, and Mary Werleman for the Carnival themed Manager's Cocktail Party, enjoyed by all. □



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Caribbean Queen Presents Local Artist Maira Kong-A-Sam

PALM BEACH - Born and raised in Aruba, fashion runs in the blood of Caribbean Queen Maira Kong-A-Sam, who is showing her collection at the Caribbean Queen boutique, Palm Beach Plaza Mall, in February. As a little girl watching her aunt make beautiful dresses and suits, she learned to sew and started creating her own style, embellishing clothes with rhinestones and other materials in order to stand out from the rest.



After high school she studied fashion in the Netherlands for 3 years, and returned home as soon as her diploma was awarded. She was homesick, she admits. Having worked in a jewelry store for a few years, she learned about gemstones and semiprecious stones. "I fell in love with their rich colors," she shares, "so I

wanted to make my own jewelry."

At first, Maira experimented with combining old and broken jewelry, putting the random pieces together to create new big and bold accessories. She taught herself all the basic skills and researched the variety of stones available, such as turquoise, Chinese crystals, Swarovski crystals,

glass, wooden beads, semiprecious stones, and freshwater pearls.

Maira usually starts her designs by first searching for eye-catching beads or pendants; then she works around the centerpiece using different colors and sizes of beads. The compliments are always generous, she reports, and the feedback positive,

as the colorful and fun creations can be worn—either casually or on a night out on the town—by anyone looking for unique and different pieces.

As a single mom, Maira welcomes any free minute to work on a new design. Her hobby, she explains, became her passion, and her wish is that everyone wearing one of her pieces will in turn feel unique and

special. "My designs are mostly one of a kind, yet I also customize special orders for clients," she adds. "My dream is to own my own jewelry shop one day; nevertheless, I am proud of what I have achieved in such a short time for Maira K Designs."

You are invited to browse Maria's collection at Caribbean Queen, Palm Beach Plaza Mall. □



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Ovechkin scores 40TH, Capitals beat Jets

The Associated Press

WASHINGTON (AP) — After getting an Olympic send-off from Secretary of State John Kerry, Alex Ovechkin scored his NHL-leading 40th goal with 12:14 remaining Thursday night as the Washington Capitals rallied from a third-period deficit for a 4-2 win over the Winnipeg Jets.

Troy Brouwer scored twice, Tom Wilson had a goal, and Braden Holtby made 34 saves for the Capitals, who are trying to generate at least a modicum of momentum headed into the Olympic break. Washington had dropped 10 of its previous 13, including a 1-0 shutout loss to the New York Islanders on Tuesday. Bryan Little and Dustin Byfuglien scored, and Ondrej Pavelec stopped 26 shots for the Jets, who had a three-game winning streak snapped.



Continued on Page 21

Secretary of State John Kerry participates in a ceremonial puck drop with Winnipeg Jets right wing Blake Wheeler (26) and Washington Capitals defenseman John Carlson (74), during a ceremony to honor those members of the Washington Capitals and Winnipeg Jets that have been selected for their country's Olympic hockey team, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014, in Washington.

Associated Press



San Antonio Spurs' Tiago Splitter (22), of Brazil, is fouled by Brooklyn Nets' Kevin Garnett (2) during the first half of an NBA basketball game on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014, in New York.

Associated Press

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Alan Anderson scored 19 of his 22 points in the second half, helping the Brooklyn Nets pull away from the short-

handed San Antonio Spurs for a 103-89 victory Thursday night. NBA Capsules Despite playing without Tony Parker, Tim Duncan, Manu Ginobili and Kawhi

Nets pull away to beat short-handed Spurs, 103-89

Leonard, their top four scorers, the Spurs were still within five points early in the fourth quarter before the Nets pulled away for good. Deron Williams added 16 points and eight assists as Brooklyn ended a six-game losing streak to San Antonio with its first victory since March 29, 2010. So banged-up that at one point that they had two players on the court wearing facial masks to protect broken noses, the Spurs fell to 2-1 on their nine-game rodeo trip. The Spurs overcame all

their challenges to pull out a 125-118 double-overtime victory at Washington on Wednesday, but didn't have enough to beat an improving Brooklyn team. Cory Joseph scored 18 for the Spurs, Danny Green had 17 and Patty Mills 16. **WARRIORS 102, BULLS 87** OAKLAND, Calif. (AP) — Stephen Curry had 34 points and nine assists, Klay Thompson scored 22 points and the undermanned Warriors rallied from 16 down in the first half to beat the Bulls. With big men Andrew

Bogut and David Lee sidelined with injuries, Golden State's streaky backcourt tandem found its shooting stroke after falling behind 34-18 in the second quarter. Curry finished 13-for-19 shooting, and Thompson shot 8 of 16 from the floor to give the Warriors' raucous fans a reason to cheer after losing five of their previous seven at home. Taj Gibson had 26 points and 13 rebounds filling in for Carlos Boozer, and Kirk Hinrich scored 15 points for Chicago. □

Lillard competing in 3 All-Star Saturday events

NEW YORK (AP) — Portland's Damian Lillard will become the first player to compete in three events during NBA All-Star Saturday in New Orleans, including a slam dunk contest that features three All-Stars for the first time in 26 years. Indiana's Paul George and Washington's John Wall also will take part in the night's marquee event on Feb. 15.

There haven't been three All-Stars in the dunk contest since the famed 1988 duel, when Michael Jordan beat Dominique Wilkins on his home floor in Chicago, in a field that also included

Clyde Drexler. Lillard, the reigning rookie of the year, will play in the Rising Stars Challenge on Friday before defending his Skills Challenge title and competing in the 3-point contest.

The remainder of the dunk field is defending champion Terrence Ross of Toronto, Harrison Barnes of Golden State and rookie Ben McLemore of Sacramento.

Cleveland All-Star Kyrie Irving will defend his 3-point title against a field that also includes All-Stars Stephen Curry of Golden State, Kevin Love of Minnesota and

Joe Johnson of Brooklyn, plus Orlando's Arron Affalo, Washington's Bradley Beal and San Antonio's Marco Belinelli.

The events will again feature an Eastern Conference vs. Western Conference format, with the teams competing for charity.

Lillard will be paired with Utah's Trey Burke as the Skills Challenge is switching to a team relay format. The other teams are: Rookies Michael Carter-Williams of Philadelphia and Victor Oladipo of Orlando; All-Star DeMar DeRozan of Toronto and Giannis Antetokounmpo of Milwaukee; and Goran Dragic of Phoenix and Reggie Jackson of Oklahoma City. □



In this Dec. 21, 2013, file photo, Portland Trail Blazers guard Damian Lillard celebrates after scoring during the second half of an NBA basketball game against the New Orleans Pelicans in Portland, Ore.

Associated Press

Anthony Davis replaces Kobe in NBA All-Star game

BRIAN MAHONEY
AP Basketball Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — New Orleans forward Anthony Davis was chosen Friday to replace the injured Kobe Bryant in the NBA All-Star game that will be played in his home city.

Davis was nearly chosen as a reserve, but missed by one spot in voting by Western Conference head coaches, a person with knowledge of the details told The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because vote totals weren't released.

The 2012 U.S. Olympian ended up getting into the Feb. 16 game at Smoothie King Center when NBA Commissioner Adam Silver



New Orleans Pelicans forward Anthony Davis (23) shoots over Chicago Bulls center Joakim Noah (13) during the first half of an NBA basketball game in New Orleans, Saturday, Feb. 1, 2014.

Associated Press

chose him to replace Bryant, who was voted by fans to start but is still recovering from a broken knee.

Davis, the No. 1 pick in the 2012 draft, is averaging 20.5 points, 10.5 rebounds and a league-leading 3.3 blocks for the Pelicans. □

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Penguins D Kris Letang out after having stroke

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Pittsburgh Penguins defenseman Kris Letang will be out for at least six weeks because of a stroke. The 26-year-old Letang had a stroke last week, Penguins general manager Ray Shero said Friday. "Kris had one brief episode of dizziness and nausea last week," Shero said. "We held him out of the Los Angeles game Thursday night, and when he continued to feel ill, tests conducted in Phoenix on Saturday gave us the first indication of his condition. "Further testing then was conducted when he returned to Pittsburgh, and he continued to undergo a battery of tests here this week." Letang will be treated with blood thinners and the stroke is not expected to threaten his career. "I hope that by making

my condition public at this time, I can help other people by encouraging them to seek medical help if they experience some of the symptoms associated with a stroke — regardless of their age or general health," Letang said. "It obviously was a shock to get the news, but I'm optimistic that I can overcome this and get back on the ice." Letang's most recent game was Jan. 27 against Buffalo. After being a Norris Trophy finalist last season, he has 10 goals — matching a career high — and 18 assists in 34 games this season for the Eastern Conference-leading Penguins. Letang has 54 goals and 227 points in 419 games since making his NHL debut with the Penguins during the 2006-07 season.



This is a Feb. 11, 2012, file photo showing Pittsburgh Penguins' Kris Letang (58) during an NHL hockey game against the Winnipeg Jets in Pittsburgh. Associated Press

The Montreal native signed a \$58 million, eight-year contract extension last summer. "The most important thing right now, of course, is Kris' health," Shero said. "We're not thinking about hockey right now. We want to make sure he gets the best possible care and gets better. After six weeks of treatment, doctors will re-evaluate Kris." □

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NHL Capsules

Continued from Page 18

CANADIENS 5, CANUCKS 2 MONTREAL (AP)

Max Pacioretty scored three goals for his third career hat trick — despite missing two penalty shots — to help the Canadiens to a victory over the Canucks that extended Vancouver's losing streak to six games.

Ryan White and Tomas Plekanec also scored for Montreal, while Carey Price made 42 saves.

Pacioretty was awarded two penalty shots in a two-minute span in the second period, but failed to convert, losing control of the puck both times. Despite missing both, Montreal's leading scorer became the first Canadiens player to take two penalty shots in the same game — let alone the same period.

Chris Higgins and Alexander Edler scored for Vancouver and Roberto Luongo stopped 25 shots.

BLUES 3, BRUINS 2, OT

ST. LOUIS (AP) — T.J. Oshie scored 3:29 into overtime, leading the Blues to a victory over the Bruins.

Oshie jammed the puck in from the side of the net as the Blues, who had a 3-2 shootout win Nov. 21 in Boston, swept the season series.

Alexander Steen and Jaden Schwartz also scored for St. Louis, which blew a 2-0 lead in the third period.

David Krejci and Brad Marchand scored for the Bruins.

RED WINGS 3, PANTHERS 1

SUNRISE, Fla. (AP) — Gustav Nyquist scored the go-ahead goal in the second period, helping lift the Red Wings over the Panthers.

Brian Lashoff and Daniel Alfredsson also scored and Jimmy Howard made 23 saves as the Red Wings ended a four-game road losing streak.

Scottie Upshall scored and Tim Thomas stopped 30 shots for Florida, which has lost four of its last five.

OILERS 2, RANGERS 1

NEW YORK (AP) — Nail Yakupov scored with 1:38 left in regulation to give the Oilers a win over the Rangers.

Ryan Smyth also scored for Edmonton, which is 5-5 in its last 10. Ben Scrivens made 35 saves.

New York's season-high four-game winning streak came to an end. Derick Brassard scored and Cam Talbot made 29 saves.

FLYERS 3, AVALANCHE 1

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Steve Mason stopped 38 shots, and Mark Streit and Michael Raffl scored goals, leading the Flyers past Colorado.

Mason blanked Detroit 5-0 on Jan. 28 and stopped the Los Angeles Kings 2-0 on Feb. 1. He was only 2:50 away from his fourth shutout of the season, and third in five games, when Nathan MacKinnon beat him for his 21st goal of the



Washington Capitals center Nicklas Backstrom, from Sweden, falls in front of Winnipeg Jets goalie Ondrej Pavelec (31), from the Czech Republic, as the puck shot by right wing Alex Ovechkin goes into the net, with defenseman Tobias Enstrom (39), from Sweden, at left during the third period of an NHL hockey game, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014, in Washington. The Capitals won 4-2.

Associated Press

season. Mason stopped his first 33 shots.

Claude Giroux scored an empty-netter in the final minute for the Flyers.

FLAMES 4, ISLANDERS 2

UNIONDALE, N.Y. (AP) — David Jones scored the tiebreaking goal late in the third period and rookie Reto Berra made 28 saves as the Flames beat the Islanders.

Jones banked the puck off the Islanders goalie Evgeni

Nabokov from a sharp angle at 14:28 to lift the Flames to their sixth victory in seven games and their first at Nassau Coliseum since 2004. Mikael Backlund added an empty-net goal for the Flames.

Sean Monahan and Dennis Wideman scored in the second period to put Calgary ahead 2-0. But the Islanders rallied to tie it on goals by defensemen Thomas Hickey and Calvin

de Haan.

SENATORS 3, SABRES 2

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — Milan Michalek scored his second goal of the game with 23 seconds left as the Senators defeated the Sabres. The Sabres had fought back to tie the game with two third-period goals, but Senators captain Jason Spezza found Michalek in the slot and he beat Johnas Enroth over the shoulder for the winner. □

Allen shoots 60 to match Champions Tour record

BOCA RATON, Florida (AP)

— Michael Allen said it wasn't until his 15th hole that he started thinking about shooting golf's magic number of 59.

And he promptly missed the birdie putt on the par-5 sixth hole.

But with birdies on two of his last three holes, Allen matched the Champions Tour record with a 12-under 60 on Friday in the Allianz Championship, finishing the first round with an eagle and 10 birdies.

The 55-year-old Allen became the ninth player in the 35-year history of the 50-and-over tour to shoot 60 and the first to accomplish the feat on a par-72 course.

"The story of my career — almost," said Allen, winless in 369 starts on the PGA Tour. "After I missed that birdie putt on No. 6, I kind of figured it wasn't happening." Allen took advantage of the calm conditions on the Old Course at Broken Sound to grab a

three-shot lead over Scott Dunlap. Allen played his last 15 holes in 11 under, highlighted by a 20-foot eagle putt on the 18th — his ninth hole of the day. "It seemed really easy," said Allen, who won the 2009 Senior PGA Championship for the first of his five Champions Tour victories. "I think it's harder to shoot a 72 when you're struggling than to shoot a 60 when you're playing well." Allen was fortunate on the par-4 fourth hole when he chun-



Michael Allen picks up his ball after putting out on the 18th green during the second round of the Senior Players Championship golf tournament at Fox Chapel Golf Club in Pittsburgh, Friday, June 28, 2013.

Associated Press

ked his approach to the green, then skulled a chip that took two bounces and fell into the hole for an unlikely birdie.

"That's when you kind

of think things are going your way," Allen said. "It's great to shoot this round, but if I'm able to win, then it will become even more magical." □

Alex Rodriguez accepts season-long suspension

RONALD BLUM

AP Sports Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Alex Rodriguez accepted his season-long suspension from Major League Baseball on Friday, the longest penalty in the sport's history related to performance-enhancing drugs. The decision came nearly four weeks after arbitrator Fredric Horowitz issued his decision largely upholding the penalty issued to the New York Yankees third baseman last summer by baseball Commissioner Bud Selig.

Rodriguez had repeatedly proclaimed his innocence and sued MLB and the Major League Baseball Players Association in federal court to overturn the penalty. But 27 days after Horowitz's decision, the three-time American League MVP withdrew the lawsuit and a previous action filed in October claiming MLB and Selig were engaged in a "witch hunt" against him. Rodriguez became the 14th and final player to accept a suspension following baseball's investigation of the Biogenesis of America anti-aging clinic.

"I think it's a good move for him," former Commissioner Fay Vincent said. "A-Rod had no chance legally, and the commissioner got his authority validated."

MLB issued low-key statement calling the decision to end the litigation "prudent." "We believe that Mr. Rodriguez's actions show



In this Aug. 13, 2013, file photo, New York Yankees' Alex Rodriguez reacts after striking out in the seventh inning of a baseball game against the Los Angeles Angels in New York.

his desire to return the focus to the play of our great game on the field and to all of the positive attributes and actions of his fellow major league players," the sport said. "We share that desire." Rodriguez had angered many of his fellow players by suing his own union in an attempt to avoid a suspension.

"Alex Rodriguez has done the right thing by withdrawing his lawsuit," the union said in a statement. "His decision to move forward is in everyone's best

interest."

After Horowitz issued his decision on Jan. 11, Rodriguez put out a defiant statement proclaiming "no player should have to go through what I have been dealing with" and promising "I am exhausting all options to ensure not only that I get justice, but that players' contracts and rights are protected."

But a few hours after the Arizona Diamondbacks became the first team this year to start spring training workouts, and with

the Yankees a week from opening camp, Rodriguez folded quietly.

"We stand by the statements issued and have no further comment," Rodriguez spokesman Ron Berkowitz said.

Rodriguez will lose most of his \$25 million salary — Horowitz ruled he is entitled to 21-183rds, \$2,868,852.46. He will be 39 when he is eligible to return in a year, and he has incentive to play during the final three seasons of his contract. The Yankees owe him \$21

Associated Press
million in 2015 and \$20 million in each of the final two seasons of the record \$275 million, 10-year deal.

But the 14-time All-Star has been hobbled by injuries in recent years and hasn't played a full season since 2007.

The timing of Rodriguez's decision was set in motion by U.S. District Judge Edgardo Ramos, who on Jan. 30 told the player's lawyers to respond by Friday to arguments from MLB and the union that the case should be dismissed. □



In a Sept. 14, 2013 file photo, New York Yankees' Derek Jeter looks on from the dugout during their 5-1 loss to the Boston Red Sox in a baseball game at Fenway Park in Boston.

Associated Press

TAMPA, Fla. (AP) — New York Yankees captain Derek Jeter is upbeat after completing his third week of baseball activities.

Jeter, who turns 40 in June, was limited to 17 games last year after breaking his left ankle during the 2012 AL championship series.

Jeter upbeat after 3rd week of baseball activities

Ahead of spring training, he is taking batting practice, fielding grounders and has resumed a running program.

"I feel good," Jeter said Friday after working out at the Yankees' minor league complex. "I've been working hard, and I've had a complete offseason to work out and strengthen everything."

Jeter started his off-field work in November, something he wasn't able to do after the 2012 season when he was still using a walking

boot into January due to ankle surgery.

"It's been fun, but it's been difficult because you're starting over from scratch," Jeter said. "Basically going for pretty much a whole year where you can't really work out. It's a long process, but it's been enjoyable now to get back to this point."

The shortstop missed the first 91 games of the 2013 season, then felt pain in his right quadriceps when he returned July 11. He went back on the DL, returned

July 28 for three games, then strained his right calf. Back in the lineup on Aug. 26, he played through Sept. 7, when he left for a pinch runner after singling against Boston. Four days later the Yankees said his season was over. Jeter wound up hitting .190 (12 for 63) with one homer and seven RBIs.

When asked if he has given any thought about this possibly being his last season, Jeter replied that he's "focused on one year at a time." □

USA Cycling unveils ambitious mountain bike series

DAVE SKRETTA
AP Sports Writer

The sport of mountain biking was created in the United States, which makes it all the more frustrating to American riders that they've been lapped by their European counterparts. USA Cycling is hoping to change that with a new domestic series that will offer the richest cross-country purse in the world and should attract most of the top riders.

The U.S. Cup Pro Series presented by Sho-Air Cycling Group came together late last year, but the details were announced this week. The four-race series begins next month and includes an \$81,000 purse that will be split evenly between the men's and women's fields.

By next year, all of the events will carry the highest UCI rating outside of World Cup events. That means more world-class racing and better competition, something that's been lacking in domestic mountain biking since the boom days of the 1980s and early '90s. "More competition makes the racing tighter and more exciting and pushes all riders to get faster," Olympic bronze medalist Georgia Gould told The Associated Press. "Racing in competitive and professionally run domestic races is the best preparation for success at the World Cup."

The opening round is March 1-2 in Dripping Springs, Texas. The following two races will be held in California later in March, and the finale is June 28-29 in Colorado Springs. All of them will be streamed live online through the We Media Project and USA Cycling. Along with prizes for winning each round, riders will accrue points toward the series championship, ensuring competitive fields for each race.

"Racing against the best racers in the world will also help Olympic hopefuls elevate their skills, fitness and strategy ahead of the 2016 Olympic Games in Rio de Janeiro," said Scott Tedro, owner of the Sho-Air Cycling Group, which is organizing the series. "It will bring the Olympic cross-country mountain bike movement back into focus in the U.S." Things weren't always so difficult for Americans on the world stage.

While most European riders focused on the road, folks such as Ned Overend and Juli Furtado were choosing the beaten path. They experimented with fatter tires, took meandering rides in the thin air of high peaks and then hurtled themselves down ski runs at breakneck speed.

This was when mountain biking was still done in the mountains. Overend and Furtado gave the U.S. a sweep of the podium at the first world champion-



In this Aug. 11, 2012, file photo, United States' Georgia Gould competes enroute to winning the bronze medal in the Mountain Bike Cycling women's race, at the 2012 Summer Olympics in Essex, England.

Associated Press

ships in 1990, and helped usher the discipline into the Olympics. It debuted at the Atlanta Games, but in a dramatically altered version: It had been taken out of the high mountains and relegated to man-made courses in parkland settings that were more spectator-friendly.

As European riders began embracing the sport, they began to dominate American riders, who were slow to adapt to what became known as cross-country mountain biking.

Gould's bronze at the London Games was just the second Olympic medal won by a rider wearing the stars-and-stripes. Susan DeMattei also won bronze in

1996.

"I think it will help push the U.S. back to the top of the mountain bike world by bringing the racing back to us," said former U.S. champion Sam Shultz, who is recovering from an injury but plans to compete in the U.S. Cup Pro Series.

"We have always had a tough time traveling to enough races to get the UCI points necessary to achieve good call-ups as well as the maximum number of Olympic start spots," he said. "This will go a long ways toward giving us the home-turf advantage. Being able to compete against the best and forcing our competitors to take the marathon over-

seas flights instead of us is great."

Todd Wells, who also competed at the London Games, hopes the new domestic series will close the considerable financial gap between mountain biking and road racing. Many elite riders give up mountain biking because it's easier to land sponsors and make a living on the road. "We have amazing young roader racers," Wells said, "and most started out mountain biking." Wells also thinks the high-profile nature of the races will help the U.S. qualify more riders for World Cup races and lead to increased business support for mountain biking. □

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Stocks rebound to post gain for the week

ALEX VEIGA
AP Business Writer

As comebacks go, this one was a couple of days in the making.

On Friday, the U.S. stock market rebounded from a deep slump earlier in the week to muster the first positive five-day stretch after three weeks of declines. The day's modest gains added to a strong finish for stocks a day earlier, enough for the Dow Jones industrial average to eke out a 0.6 percent gain for the week, while the S&P 500 index finished up 0.8 percent. Both are still down for the year. The Dow Jones industrial average rose 165.55 points, or 1.1 percent, to 15,794.08. The Standard & Poor's 500 rose 23.59 points, or 1.3 percent, to 1,797.02. The Nasdaq composite increased 68.74 points, or 1.7 percent, to 4,125.86. Expedia led the gains in the S&P 500 index, surging 14 percent after reporting that its profit and revenue jumped as hotel bookings increased.

Friday's rally didn't seem likely to happen as the day got going. A widely anticipated jobs report from the Labor Department showed U.S. employers added 113,000 jobs last month, less than the average monthly gain of 194,000 in 2013. This followed December's tepid increase of just 75,000. The overall payroll figure disappointed markets, and index futures fell before

regular stock trading began. Stocks moved higher in mid-morning trading as investors dug deeper into the details of the report, which also showed that manufacturers, construction firms and mining and drilling companies added

economy, and these are the jobs we got for a growing economy." The government also reported that the nation's unemployment rate dipped to 6.6 percent in January from 6.7 percent in December. It was the lowest

The outlook began to brighten at midweek, with a survey of private businesses that showed companies added 175,000 jobs in January, roughly in line with average monthly gains the past two years. On Thursday, news that



Trader Nicholas DeStafano, center, works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange. On Friday, the U.S. stock market rebounded from a deep slump earlier in the week to muster the first positive five-day stretch after three weeks of declines. (AP Photo/Richard Drew)

76,000 jobs combined, a strong showing. "The market had a tough time figuring out what to do with the (jobs) number when it first came out," said J.J. Kinahan, chief strategist with TD Ameritrade. "As the day went on, it just kind of discounted some of the negatives in there to say, 'What do we really want? We want a growing

rate since October 2008. The market dug itself a hole at the start of the week, plunging more than 2 percent on Monday. The slide began with investor anxiety over an industry survey that found that manufacturing grew much more slowly in January than in December. Lackluster U.S. auto sales for January added to the bad news.

fewer people applied for unemployment benefits last week helped lift the market. The Dow is still down 4.7 percent for the year, while the S&P 500 is down 2.8 percent. Did the government's latest survey of the job market give investors reason to feel better about the economy? Hard to say. □

Oil briefly tops \$100 as fuel demand rises

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — The price of oil briefly rose above \$100 a barrel Friday for the first time this year on rising demand for fuel and some positive sentiment about the U.S. job market.

Benchmark U.S. crude for March delivery gained \$2.04, or 2.1 percent, to close at \$99.88 a barrel the New York Mercantile Exchange. Oil climbed above \$100 in the afternoon before dropping back. Oil last topped \$100 on Dec. 30.

Energy analyst Stephen Schork said oil's rise was brought about by rising prices for wholesale gasoline and low supplies of diesel and heating oil. That combination will encourage refiners to buy and process more crude oil. "It's a function of a products pulling crude," he said. "The market needs product."

Heating oil supplies have declined as a cold and snowy winter has homeowners constantly cranking up the thermostat. The Energy Department said Wednesday that supplies of distillates, which include heating oil and diesel, fell by 2.4 million barrels last week and are now 12 percent below year-ago levels. Heating oil futures gained 6 cents to \$3.05 a gallon.

While some U.S. drivers have stayed indoors this winter, gasoline demand is turning out to be stronger than expected, Schork said.

Wholesale gasoline futures increased 7 cents to \$2.75 and gained 15 cents, or 6 percent over the last three days.

Oil was also pulled higher by a sharp rise in the U.S. stock market. While the Labor Department's jobs report showed a relatively weak number of new jobs, the number of people in the job market rose, suggesting that people are feeling better about their prospects and that hiring was depressed by the bad weather. □

US consumers boost borrowing by \$18.8B in December

MARTIN CRUTSINGER
AP Economics Writer

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. consumers boosted their borrowing in December by the largest amount in 10 months as demand for auto, student and credit card loans showed big gains. Consumer borrowing rose \$18.8 billion in December, the biggest increase since February, the Federal Reserve reported Friday. The category that includes auto and student loans increased the most, rising \$13.8 billion. Credit card debt, which has been lagging, rose by \$5 billion. That was the larg-

est jump since May. The big increase pushed total borrowing to a fresh record of \$3.1 trillion. Gains in borrowing are viewed as an encouraging sign that consumers are more confident and willing to take on more debt to finance consumer spending, which accounts for 70 percent of economic activity.

Consumers had increased borrowing by \$12.4 billion in November.

Over the past year, consumers have become more confident and have been willing to take on debt. Most of those gains have come in the category that

covers auto and student loans. Credit card borrowing has been rising more slowly. Borrowing on credit cards plunged after the Great Recession as financial institutions tightened lending standards and households became more cautious about taking on high-interest debt at a time when millions of people were losing their jobs. Even with recent gains, credit card debt is still 15.7 percent below its peak above \$1 trillion reached in July 2008. Credit card debt in December stood at \$861.9 billion, up just 1.9 percent from a year ago.

The measure of auto loans and student loans in December stood at \$2.24 trillion, up 8 percent from a year ago. It has been up every month but one since May 2010.

A separate quarterly report on consumer credit done by the Federal Reserve Bank of New York shows that student loan debt has been the biggest driver of borrowing since the recession officially ended in June 2009.

The Fed's borrowing report tracks credit card debt, auto loans and student loans but not mortgages or home equity loans. □

Apple takes a \$14B bite of its stock via buyback

MICHELLE CHAPMAN

AP Business Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Apple has repurchased \$14 billion of its stock in the two weeks after its first-quarter financial results and second-quarter revenue outlook disappointed investors. Its shares rose in morning trading Friday.

Apple bought \$12 billion of the shares through an accelerated repurchase program and \$2 billion on the open market, the company confirmed.

Late Thursday Apple Inc. CEO Tim Cook said in an interview with The Wall Street Journal that the company was "surprised" when its stock dropped 8 percent the day after its earnings report and revenue outlook. He told the newspaper he wanted to be "aggressive" and "opportunistic."

Apple has grown accus-

tomed to being a leader in the technology sector. In the Steve Jobs era, consumers and investors alike eagerly awaited each new product announcement and have been rewarded as devices like the iPhone and iPad won accolades for innovation and pushing technology forward.

But with each new innovation over the years, there have been increasingly higher expectations for the future. So when Apple's first-quarter iPad and iPhone sales were not as big as expected by investors, and its second-quarter revenue forecast fell short of Wall Street's view, the stock got dinged.

In the past year Apple's shares have started losing some ground due to concerns about slowing growth and increasing competition.



Apple CEO Tim Cook speaks on stage in Cupertino, Calif. Apple has reportedly repurchased \$14 billion of its stock in the two weeks after its first-quarter financials and second-quarter revenue outlook disappointed investors. Its shares climbed in premarket trading Friday, Feb. 7, 2014.

(AP Photo/Marcio Jose Sanchez)

And with the smartphone market becoming inundated with options, Apple may be hard pressed to

lift its stock back to where it stood at its peak price of more than \$700 in September 2012. That was before investors began to fret about fiercer competition in mobile devices and Apple's lack of a breakthrough product since the iPad came out nearly four years ago.

But Apple isn't sitting idle. Its \$14 billion stock buy-

back signals the company remains confident in its business. This is good news for investors, including Carl Icahn. The billionaire activist investor has been pressuring Apple to boost its share repurchases. Just last month Icahn raised his stake in Apple, revealing on Twitter that he'd put another \$500 million into Apple stock. □

United States Postal Service reports a decline in losses

RON NIXON

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WASHINGTON - Aggressive cost cutting and increased revenue from its packing and shipping business helped the Postal Service stem its losses in the first quarter of its fiscal year, which ended Dec. 31.

The Postal Service posted a \$354 million net loss in the first quarter, compared with a \$1.3 billion loss over the same period in 2012. The first quarter has traditionally been one of its strongest periods because it includes the Christmas holidays, when the agency experiences an increase in the number of packages and letters mailed.

Total mail volume, however, continued to decline. It was 42 billion pieces for the quarter, down from 43.5 billion for the same period a year earlier, according to agency officials.

Revenue from first-class mail, which provides the bulk of the revenue for the Postal Service, declined \$209 million, or 2.8 percent,

from the same period the previous year, with a decrease in volume of 817 million pieces, or 4.6 percent. The agency's shipping and packaging business increased by \$479 million, or 14.1 percent, over 2013 first-quarter results, fueled by the growth of online shopping, Sunday deliveries in limited markets and aggressive marketing campaigns to promote the shipping services, postal officials said.

Post office officials said it was the 19th time in the past 21 quarters that it had lost money and called on Congress to pass legislation that would allow the agency to make changes to its business model, such as ending Saturday mail deliveries.

"The Postal Service is doing its part within the bounds of law to right-size the organization, and I am very proud of the achievements we have made to reduce costs while significantly growing our package business," said Patrick

R. Donahoe, the postmaster general. "We cannot return the organization to long-term financial stability without passage of comprehensive postal reform legislation."

A Senate committee Thursday passed a bill that would help reform the financially strapped agency. The bill, passed by the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee, would allow the post office to end Saturday delivery and a recent temporary increase in the cost of stamps would be made permanent. The post office would also be allowed to ship beer and wine, something it is currently prohibited from doing.

The legislation would also make changes to a 2006 law that requires the Postal Service to pay nearly \$5.5 billion a year for health benefits to future retirees, a mandate that is not imposed on any other agency. The post office has defaulted on three payments since 2012. □

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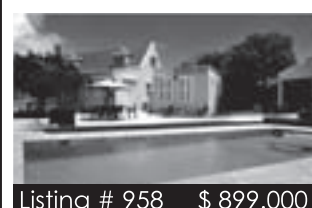
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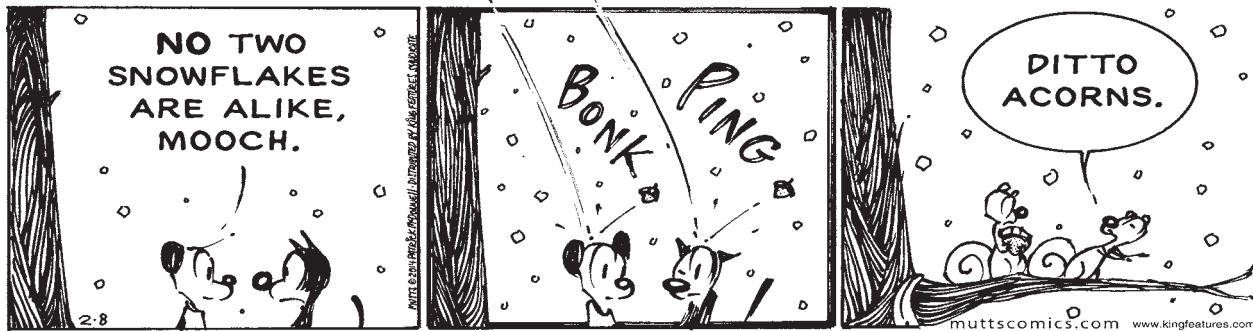
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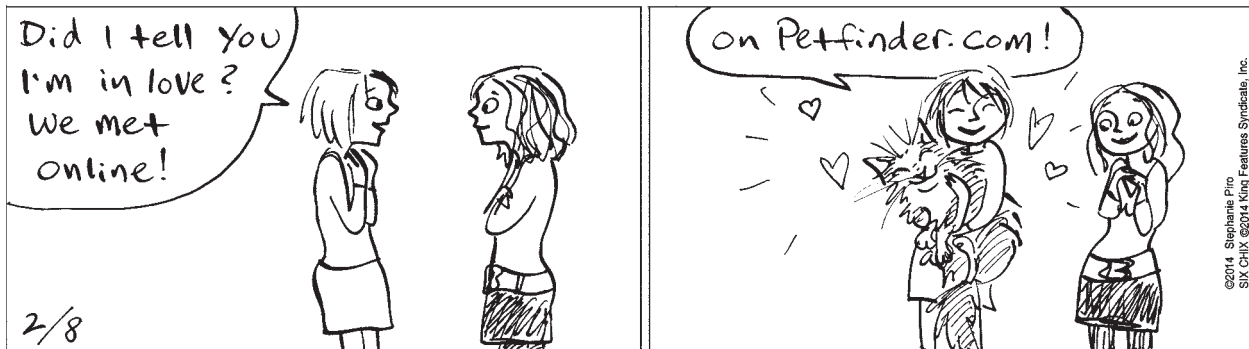
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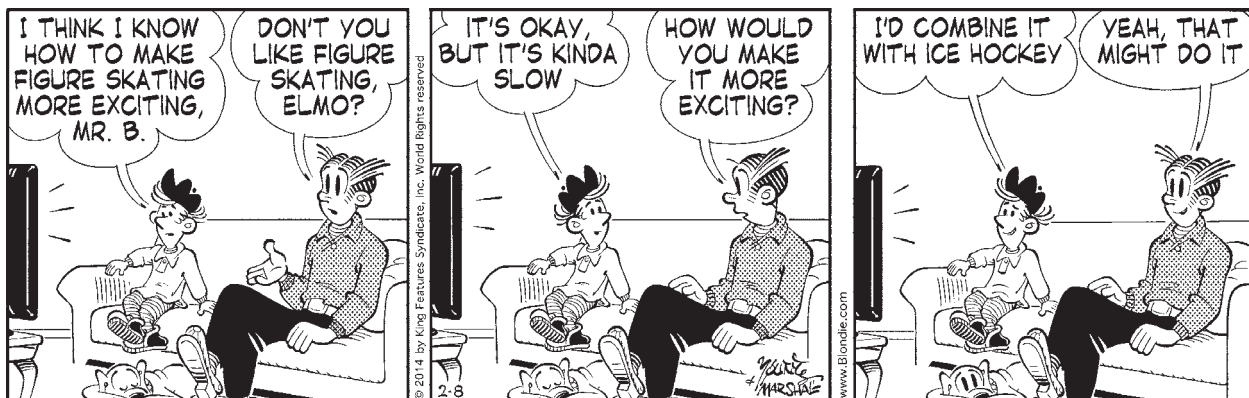
Mutts



6 Chix



Blondie



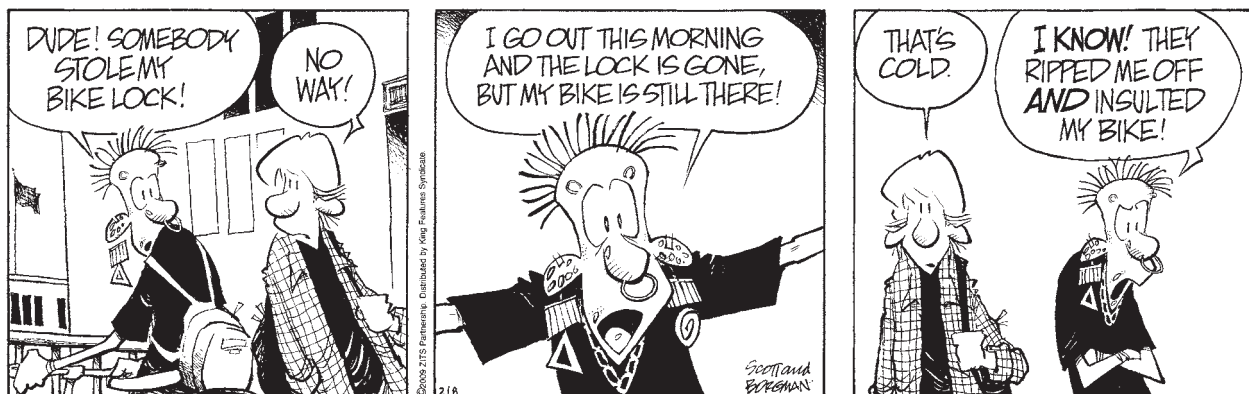
Mother Goose & Grimm



Baby Blues



Zits



Conceptis Sudoku

	3					4	
			3		6		
	2		1	9	4		7
4			2		1		8
5			7		9		2
	1		4	6	7		5
			8		5		
	8					3	

Difficulty Level ★★★★★

2/08

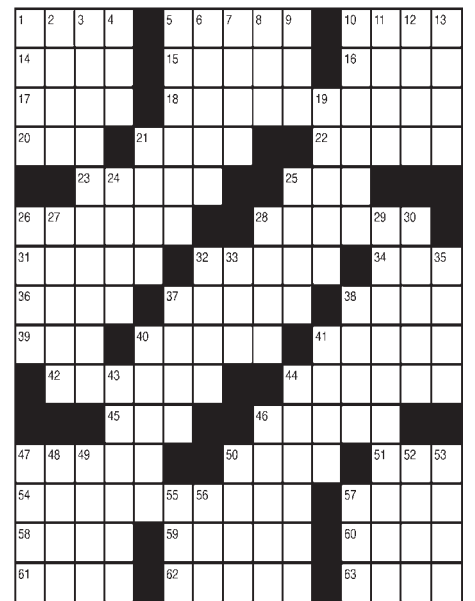
Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Sunday.

Yesterday's puzzle answer

2	8	1	7	3	6	4	9	5
4	3	5	2	9	8	6	7	1
9	7	6	4	1	5	2	8	3
6	1	4	9	5	2	8	3	7
3	9	8	6	7	1	5	4	2
5	2	7	3	8	4	1	6	9
7	4	2	5	6	3	9	1	8
8	5	3	1	4	9	7	2	6
1	6	9	8	2	7	3	5	4

ACROSS

- 1 Certain
5 Flock member
10 Chunk of concrete
14 __ house; Realtor's event
15 Military chaplain
16 Tramp
17 Shape; form
18 Not courteous
20 180° from WSW
21 Mayberry man
22 Landlady's collections
23 Nolte & others
25 Companion
26 Like a song that stays in your head
28 Roam
31 Backstreet
32 Pretense; sham
34 Bumped into
36 Was dishonest
37 Actress Bo __
38 Long story
39 Scale divisions: abbr.
40 Picture card
41 Of the kidneys
42 Has __; is emotionally troubled
44 Figure with a circumference
45 Feel sick
46 Synagogue leader
47 Dark beer
50 Pigs
51 Boston cream
54 Link
57 Saloons
58 Zone
59 Davis or Midler
60 Resting upon
61 Cluttered state
62 Impudent
63 Declare untrue
- DOWN**
1 Partial amount
2 Come __; find
3 Persistent



Created by Jacqueline E. Mathews

2/8/14

Friday's Puzzle Solved

L	A	M	P	S	T	R	I	P	P	A	P	A
A	W	A	R	E	I	O	T	A	A	G	E	S
N	A	D	I	R	G	O	E	S	R	E	A	P
E	Y	E	S	I	G	H	T	T	R	A	N	C
M	O	R	T	M	O	I	S	T	E	N		
P	U	R	S	U	E	G	A	R	B	O		
U	S	A	S	A	B	E	R	S	L	A	M	S
T	E	R	M	T	E	N	S	E	S	W	A	T
T	R	E	A	T	R	E	H	A	B	E	L	I
N	E	S	T	S	G	L	I	D	E	R		
R	E	S	E	N	T	S	P	E	O	N		
A	V	I	A	T	E	P	A	R	A	S	I	T
C	A	N	T	E	P	I	C	T	I	B	I	A
E	D	G	E	D	A	L	E	D	I	C	T	
D	E	E	R	S	L	E	D	D	E	S	K	S

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2/8/14

- 38 Belgrade native
40 Not __; almost
41 Curved bones
43 Steam baths
44 TV's " __ & Lacey"
46 Underground plant parts
47 Con game
- 48 Ripped
49 On __ own; independent
50 Strikes
52 Common metal
53 Catch sight of
55 NBC rival
56 Soothing drink
57 Naughty

Hoffman's funeral draws Streep, Blanchett

KAREN MATTHEWS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — Philip Seymour Hoffman's private funeral on Friday drew stars Meryl Streep, Cate Blanchett, Ethan Hawke, Amy Adams and others paying their respects to an actor widely considered among the best of his generation.

The list of mourners also included Michelle Williams, Julianne Moore, Joaquin Phoenix, Louis C.K., Mary Louise Parker, John Slattery, Jerry Stiller, Marisa Tomei, Spike Lee and the director Mike Nichols. Playwright David Bar Katz, who found Hoffman's body, looked visibly upset as he arrived.

Hoffman, 46, was found dead Sunday of an apparent heroin overdose in his Manhattan apartment. He leaves behind his partner of 15 years, Mimi O'Donnell, and their three children. O'Donnell was seen cradling their youngest child as she entered the church.

Police did not allow anyone to linger on the block outside the church, and the media was penned in an area far from the mourners. □

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GOLD Season
OS \$10k OV \$9500
Oceanfront \$17k
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Mein Shiff 2

Feb 10

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Scientists find 800,000-year-old footprints in UK

JILL LAWLESS

Associated Press

LONDON (AP) — They were a British family on a day out — almost a million years ago.

Archaeologists announced Friday that they have discovered human footprints in England that are between 800,000 and 1 million years old — the most ancient found outside Africa, and the earliest evidence of human life in northern Europe.

A team from the British Museum, London's Natural History Museum and Queen Mary college at the University of London uncovered imprints from up to five individuals in ancient estuary mud at Happisburgh on the country's eastern coast.

British Museum archaeologist Nick Ashton said the discovery — recounted in detail in the journal PLOS ONE — was "a tangible link to our earliest human relatives."

Preserved in layers of silt and sand for hundreds of millennia before being exposed by the tide last year, the prints give a vivid glimpse of some of our most ancient ancestors. They were left by a group, including at least two children and one adult male. They could have been be a family foraging on the banks of a river scientists think may be the ancient Thames, beside grasslands where bison, mammoth, hippos and rhinoceros roamed.

University of Southampton archaeology professor Clive Gamble, who was not involved in the project, said the discovery was "tremendously significant."

"It's just so tangible," he said. "This is the closest we've got to seeing the people.



Undated handout photo issued by the British Museum Friday Feb. 7, 2014 of some of the human footprints, thought to be more than 800,000 years old, found in silt on the beach at Happisburgh on the Norfolk coast of England, with a camera lens cap laid beside them to indicate scale.

Associated Press

"When I heard about it, it was like hearing the first line of (William Blake's hymn) 'Jerusalem' — 'And did those feet, in ancient time, walk upon England's mountains green?' Well, they walked upon its muddy estuary."

The researchers said the humans who left the footprints may have been related to Homo antecessor, or "pioneer man," whose fossilized remains have been found in Spain. That species died out about 800,000 years ago.

Ashton said the footprints are between 800,000 — "as a conservative estimate" — and 1 million years old, at least 100,000 years older than scientists' earlier estimate of the first human habitation in Britain. That's significant because 700,000 years ago, Britain had a warm, Mediterranean-style climate. The earlier period was much colder, similar to modern-day Scandinavia. Natural History Museum ar-

chaeologist Chris Stringer said that 800,000 or 900,000 years ago Britain was "the edge of the inhabited world."

"This makes us rethink our feelings about the capacity of these early people, that they were coping with conditions somewhat colder than the present day," he said.

"Maybe they had cultural adaptations to the cold we hadn't even thought were possible 900,000 years ago. Did they wear clothing? Did they make shelters, wind-breaks and so on? Could

they have they have the use of fire that far back?" he asked.

Scientists dated the footprints by studying their geological position and from nearby fossils of long-extinct animals including mammoth, ancient horse and early vole.

John McNabb, director of the Center for the Archaeology of Human Origins at the University of Southampton — who was not part of the research team — said the use of several lines of evidence meant "the dating is pretty sound."

Once uncovered, the perishable prints were recorded using sophisticated digital photography to create 3-D images in which it's possible to discern arches of feet, and even toes.

Isabelle De Groote, a specialist in ancient human remains at Liverpool John Moores University who worked on the find, said that from the pattern of the prints, the group of early humans appeared to be "pottering around," perhaps foraging for food.

She said it wasn't too much of a stretch to call it a family.

"These individuals traveling together, it's likely that they were somehow related," she said.

Research at Happisburgh will continue, and scientists are hopeful of finding fossilized remains of the ancient humans, or evidence of their living quarters, to build up a fuller picture of their lives.

The footprint find will form part of an exhibition, "Britain: One Million Years of the Human Story," opening at the Natural History Museum next week.

The footprints themselves, which survived for almost 1 million years, won't be there. Two weeks after they were uncovered, North Sea tides had washed them away. □

U.S. study: Puerto Rico estuary highly contaminated

DANICA COTO

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico

(AP) — A federal study has found that a large estuary in southwest Puerto Rico has one of the highest concentrations of pollutants ever measured in the history of a U.S. monitoring program launched nearly three decades ago, scientists said Thursday.

Researchers found that Guanica Bay has unusually high levels of chlordane, once used as a pesticide, and polychlorinated biphenyls, or PCBs, a banned substance once used in part as coolant fluid for transformers.

The bay also has high levels of the metals chromi-

um and nickel, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, which has run a nationwide contaminant monitoring program since 1986.

The three-year study was completed in 2012, and NOAA scientists believe the pollutants remain in the bay's sediment and are affecting nearby ecosystems. "Sediment concentrations usually don't change that quickly over time," NOAA ecologist and lead investigator David Whitall said in a phone interview. "It was a little bit surprising to me that the PCBs are as high as they are."

Scientists say the contami-

nants pose a serious toxic threat to coral, fish and other organisms in the area. Whitall said humans also could be at risk if they eat fish caught in that region, noting the bay attracts fishermen. Guanica Bay is located just east of La Parguera, a stretch of coastline popular with tourists. The bay is nestled in an industrial zone, but researchers do not yet know exactly what led to such high levels of contaminants.

NOAA officials have shared the information with Puerto Rico's government and with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, but it is unclear whether any type of cleanup is planned. □

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NYC mayor welcomes Pussy Riot to City Hall

NEW YORK (AP) — New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio is welcoming the Russian protest punk band Pussy Riot to City Hall.

Maria Alekhina and Nadezhda Tolokonnikova are on a tour of New York and visited City Hall late Friday afternoon.

They've also appeared on the talk show "The Colbert Report" and at an Amnesty International concert in Brooklyn.

The women have been critical of Russian President Vladimir Putin and political conditions in their homeland.

They were released in December after nearly two years in jail.

They were convicted of hooliganism after they staged a protest in a Russian church.

De Blasio says he is a "tremendous admirer" of the duo.

He applauded their defense of "human rights" and "free speech."



In this Feb. 5, 2014 file photo, Nadezhda "Nadya" Tolokonnikova, left, and Maria "Masha" Alekhina of Pussy Riot, participate in a press conference for Amnesty International's "Bringing Human Rights Home" concert at the Barclays Center in New York. Associated Press

Argentine art exhibit celebrates Woody Allen

DEBORA REY
Associated Press

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)

— While filmmaker Woody Allen deals with a scandal in New York, fans are celebrating him in Buenos Aires, Argentina.

"We love Woody so much" is a new exhibit of paintings, drawings, photos and videos that celebrate Allen's comedic talent and tormented characters.

Dylan Farrow accused the filmmaker of sexually abusing her decades ago when Woody Allen was going through a nasty separation with her adoptive mother Mia Farrow. Allen has long denied it and authorities declined to charge him with any crime. Some of the Farrowes renewed the accu-

sation when Allen was nominated for another Oscar this year. Others have stood by him.

"These accusations haven't been proven, but his life's work has been proven," artist Hugo



An image of U.S. director Woody Allen is projected on a wall at an art exhibit titled "Queremos tanto a Woody," or "We so love Woody" by Argentine artist Hugo Echarri in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014. Associated Press

Echarri told The Associated Press. "It will remain and will forever be admired."



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CASINO AND SHOPS

Loose lips give ammunition to MSNBC foes

DAVID BAUDER

AP Television Writer

NEW YORK (AP) — Since MSNBC is in the political ring, its opponents are always on the lookout for things to attack. Lately, NBC's left-leaning cable news sister has offered plenty of ammunition.

MSNBC fired a staff member last week for an offensive tweet after top Republicans began talking about refusing to appear on the network. It was fourth in a string of apologies by people who've gone too far with their words, leading to questions about whether the incidents reveal a systemic problem.

"It's one thing to make (mistakes) a few times in a row. That's bad luck," said Tom Rosenstiel, executive director of the American Press Institute. "But if you keep doing it after you've acknowledged it, that suggests a blind spot."

The provocative or profane can be a fine line, particularly when appealing to an opinionated fan base that cheers a hard hit on a rival. MSNBC President Phil Griffin moved quickly to contain any damage following the latest incident, where a message on the network's Twitter feed suggested the right wing would hate a Cheerios ad featuring a biracial couple. "With increasing frequency many of your hosts have personally denigrated and demeaned Americans — es-



This Aug. 2, 2011 file photo shows MSNBC President Phil Griffin, left, answering a question as Rachel Maddow, host of "The Rachel Maddow Show," looks on at the NBC Universal summer press tour in Beverly Hills, Calif.

pecially conservative and Republican Americans — without ever attempting to further meaningful political dialogue," GOP National Committee Chairman Rep. Paul Ryan wrote to him. Griffin apologized to Ryan, who backed off his threat not to appear on MSNBC programs and to encourage other Republicans to do the same. The other incidences differed in degrees and targets. In November, Alec Baldwin apologized and subsequently quit for something that wasn't even on MSNBC's air: He was accused of using an anti-gay slur in a New York City street confrontation. But for

the language involved, the timing may have been opportune; Baldwin's weekly program was a ratings dud. Shortly after, afternoon host Martin Bashir apologized for an on-air suggestion that someone should defecate in former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin's mouth. After a week of not addressing the incident publicly, MSNBC accepted Bashir's resignation.

Melissa Harris-Perry apologized after Mitt Romney's family Christmas card, which showed the Republican's adopted, African-American grandson, was joked about on her show. She said she meant to praise the family's inclusion,

but the message went awry with her panelists' sarcasm. "MSNBC got the wrong message from its Keith Olbermann experience," Paul Levinson, communications professor at Fordham University, said of the anchor whose intense anti-GOP commentaries set MSNBC on its new path before his relationship with management soured. "You had somebody who was very charismatic and galvanizing and they thought it was OK basically to let anybody say whatever they want." Griffin, who declined comment through a spokeswoman, has quietly put the word out to hosts to avoid personal attacks.

Associated Press

Rachel Maddow's meticulous, fact-based criticisms of conservatives is looked upon as the network's model.

In an interview with The Daily Beast, he promised transparency. "If you make a mistake, you've got to address it, and we've done that throughout all the last six years that I've been here," he said.

Griffin's a survivor, one of a dwindling number of top NBC Universal executives who predate the company's takeover by Comcast Corp. He's succeeded by establishing MSNBC's identity as a liberal alternative to industry leader Fox News Channel.

A traditional post-presidential election hangover hurt MSNBC, with viewership dropping 29 percent between 2012 and 2013, the Nielsen company said. The network, particularly Maddow, showed signs of life with its attention paid to the New Jersey Gov. Chris Christie bridge story, hinting at better days when politics becomes a bigger story.

Financially, the picture is much brighter as new deals with cable and satellite companies have taken effect over the past few years.

As opposed to years when the network struggled for direction, its current identity makes it essential to more customers, and NBC Universal can charge higher prices. □



The 2014 Winter Olympic games official mascots, the Leopard, the Polar Bear, and the Hare, perform during the opening ceremony of the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia, Friday, Feb. 7, 2014.

Associated Press

Illegal streams enable early U.S. ceremony viewing

NEW YORK (AP) - NBC's decision not to stream a feed of the Winter Olympic opening ceremony live in the United States didn't mean that video couldn't be found.

Links to the ceremony from other sources popped up online Friday on social media sites like Twitter, sometimes accompanied by complaints about NBC's decision. NBC has rights to Olympic video in the United States, but there are other rights holders outside the country that aired the ceremony live.

NBC said Friday that a "very small number of users" watched online instead of waiting for the network's prime-time coverage. During the London Olympics in 2012, NBC estimated that less than 2 percent of Olympics video viewed in the United States was not from NBC's official feed.

The network would not discuss anti-piracy efforts taken in conjunction with the International Olympic Committee.

The ceremony over, NBC is showing all of the competition live online or on cable TV. No decision has been announced on the closing ceremony, although NBC streamed that online. There is a nine-hour time difference between the eastern United States and Sochi. □

What Machines Can't Do



DAVID BROOKS
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We're clearly heading into an age of brilliant technology. Computers are already impressively good at guiding driverless cars and beating humans at chess and Jeopardy. As Erik Brynjolfsson and Andrew McAfee of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology point out in their book "The Second Machine Age," computers are increasingly going to be able to perform important parts of even mostly cognitive jobs, like picking stocks, diagnosing diseases and granting parole.

As this happens, certain mental skills will become less valuable because computers will take over. Having a great memory will probably be less valuable. Being able to be a straight-A student will be less valuable - gathering masses of information and regurgitating it back on tests. So will being able to do any mental activity that involves following a set of rules. But what human skills will be more valuable?

In the news business, some of those skills are already evident. Technology has rewarded sprinters (people who can recognize and alertly post a message on Twitter about some interesting immediate event) and marathons (people who can write large conceptual stories), but it has hurt middle-distance runners (people who write 800-word summaries of yesterday's news conference). Technology has rewarded graphic artists who can visualize data, but it has punished those who can't turn written reporting into video presentations. More generally, the age of brilliant machines seems to reward a few traits. First, it rewards enthusiasm. The amount of information in front of us is practically infinite; so is that amount of data that can be collected with new tools. The people who seem to do best possess a voracious explanatory drive, an almost obsessive need to follow their curiosity. Maybe they started with obsessive gaming sessions, or marathon all-night study sessions, but they are driven to perform extended bouts of concentration, diving into and trying to make sense of these bottomless information oceans.

In his book, "Smarter Than You Think," Clive Thompson describes the work of Deb Roy, who wired his house with equipment so he and his team could monitor and record every word he and his wife uttered while his son was learning to speak. That is total commitment and total immer-

sion in an attempt to understand the language learning process. Second, the era seems to reward people with extended time horizons and strategic discipline. When Garry Kasparov was teaming with a computer to playing freestyle chess (in which a human and machine join up to play against another human and machine), he reported that his machine partner possessed greater "tactical acuity," but he possessed greater "strategic guidance."

That doesn't seem too surprising. A computer can calculate a zillion options, move by move, but a human can provide an overall sense of direction and a conceptual frame. In a world of on-line distractions, the person who can maintain a long obedience toward a single goal, and who can filter out what is irrelevant to that goal, will obviously have enormous worth. Third, the age seems to reward procedural architects. The giant Internet celebrities didn't so much come up with ideas, they came up with systems in which other people could express ideas: Facebook, Twitter, Wikipedia, etc. That is to say they designed an architecture that possesses a center of gravity, but which allowed loose networks of soloists to collaborate. One of the oddities of collaboration is that tightly knit teams are not the most creative. Loosely bonded teams are, teams without a few domineering presences, teams that allow people to think alone before they share results with the group. So a manager who can organize a decentralized network around a clear question, without letting it dissipate or clump, will have enormous value. Fifth, essentialists will probably be rewarded. Any child can say, "I'm a dog" and pretend to be a dog. Computers struggle to come up with the essence of "I" and the essence of "dog," and they really struggle with coming up with what parts of "I-ness" and "dog-ness" should be usefully blended if you want to pretend to be a dog. This is an important skill because creativity can be described as the ability to grasp the essence of one thing, and then the essence of some very different thing, and smash them together to create some entirely new thing. In the 1950s, the bureaucracy was the computer. People were organized into technocratic systems in order to perform routinized information processing. But now the computer is the computer. The role of the human is not to be dispassionate, depersonalized or neutral. It is precisely the emotive traits that are rewarded: the voracious lust for understanding, the enthusiasm for work, the ability to grasp the gist, the empathetic sensitivity to what will attract attention and linger in the mind.

Unable to compete when it comes to calculation, the best workers will come with heart in hand. □



The GOP's Immigration Delusion



ROSS DOUTHAT
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The debate over immigration reform, rekindled last week by House Republican leaders, bears a superficial resemblance to last fall's debate over the government shutdown.

Again, you have establishment Republicans transparently eager to cut a deal with the White House and a populist wing that doesn't want to let them do it. Again, you have Republican business groups and donors wringing their hands over the intransigence of the base, while talk-radio hosts and right-wing bloggers warn against an imminent inside-the-Beltway sellout. Again, you have a bill that could pass the House tomorrow - but only if John Boehner were willing to live with having mostly Democrats voting for it.

Except there's one big difference: This time, the populists are right. They're right about the policy, which remains a mess in every new compromise that's floated - offering "solutions" that are unlikely to be permanent, enforcement provisions that probably won't take effect, and favoring special interests, right and left, over the interests of the citizenry at large.

A reasonable compromise, for instance, would condition amnesty for illegal immigrants on substantial new enforcement measures, to ensure that this mass legalization would be the last. But the bills under discussion almost always offer some form of legal status before enforce-

ment takes effect, which promises a replay of the Reagan-era amnesty's failure to ever deliver the limits on future immigration that it promised. A reasonable immigration compromise would also privilege high-skilled immigration over low-skilled immigration, given the unemployment crisis among low-skilled native workers and the larger social crisis that threatens to slow assimilation and upward mobility alike. But the House leadership seems to favor an approach that would create a permanent noncitizen class of low-wage workers and expand guest-worker programs - a recipe for looser labor markets, continued wage stagnation and fewer jobs for the existing unemployed. So immigration policy is problematic on the merits - and then it's politically problematic for Republicans as well. Immigration ranks 16th on the public's list of priorities, according to the latest Pew numbers, so it's difficult to see how making this the signature example of a new, solutions-oriented GOP is going to help the party in the near term. Whereas it's much easier to see how it helps the Democrats: If a bill passes, it will do so with heavy Democratic support, hand President Barack Obama a policy victory at a time when he looks like a lame duck, and demoralize the right along the way.

Admittedly, a big push for immigration reform would not be as straightforwardly idiotic as shutting down the government without clear goals or plausible demands. But it would probably have some of the same political effects: It would divide the GOP, perplex the public and let the White House reap immediate political benefits no matter how the push turned out.

So why are Republican leaders flirting with the idea? In part for principled reasons - libertarianism, pro-business sentiment and "compassionate conservative" impulses all align to make comprehensive reform seem like an obvious good to many figures

in the party, and to obscure its downsides and its risks.

But it's also hard for GOP elites to let go of the idea that there's a simple, one-fell-swoop solution to their electoral difficulties. The entire post-2012 immigration reform push was born out of this hope - that a single policy shift could deliver the Hispanic vote, save the party from its demographic crisis, and (perhaps most important) make other reforms and innovations unnecessary.

This conceit was always a fond delusion, not least because most Hispanics are not single-issue voters, and their leftward tilt has always been related to broader socioeconomic concerns. So with them, as with most Americans, the problem for Republicans in 2008 and 2012 was much bigger than the immigration issue: It was a platform designed for the challenges of 1980, and rhetoric that seemed to write off half the country as layabouts and moochers. And any solution for the party, in 2016 and beyond, would have to offer much more than the same old Reagan-era script with an amnesty stapled at the bottom. Fortunately for the Republican future, we're finally beginning to see the right's politicians reckon with this reality, and throw themselves into the real work of reform. Indeed, this is happening more quickly than I once expected: In just the last week alone, recent Republican forays on tax reform, poverty and prisons have been joined by a plausible health care alternative and baby steps toward a proposal to help the long-term uninsured. But that, too, is part of what makes the leadership's immigration fixation so perverse. For the first time since the Bush presidency, high-profile Republicans are showing an interest in policy ideas that are fresh, politically savvy and well-suited to the current economic malaise. Which makes it exactly the wrong time for the party to throw itself into a furious debate over an idea that is none of the above. □

Red Dress Collection:

Lindsey Vonn Struts The Runway - With Crutches

JOCELYN NOVECK

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — They weren't ski poles. They were crutches.

But when Lindsey Vonn raised them in the air triumphantly Thursday evening, she got the same kind of cheers she might have gotten at the bottom of a mountain, after a victorious ski run. Even if this wasn't a ski run but a runway.

Vonn, the 2010 Olympic gold medalist who had to forgo the Sochi Games due to a bad knee injury, was clearly making the most of her time off the slopes as she joined some 20 other women at the Red Dress Collection, an annual event that has become the traditional kickoff to New York Fashion Week. It fea-

tures celebrities from various fields strutting the runway to bring awareness to heart disease.

The first Red Dress show was held in 2001, at the beginning of the National Heart, Blood and Lung Institute's campaign to reach out to women.

This year, there was a special emphasis on getting the word out to younger women, too, who might not yet be thinking about taking care of their hearts. And so a number of young celebrities walked the runway, including Bella Thorne, the 16-year-old actress best known from the Disney Channel series "Shake It Up." Though she was the youngest, Thorne was one of the most confident and relaxed of the

evening's models, sauntering with aplomb atop her gold heels in a long Badgley Mischka number.

Thorne, who has experienced heart disease in her family, said before the show that she was excited and a little nervous, but also looked forward to "that feeling you get when you know what you're doing is making a difference."

Vonn, 29, wore a short Cynthia Rowley dress, the better to navigate those crutches. Fellow Olympian Sasha Cohen, the figure skater, also 29, wore a sleek Mark Bouwer gown. Food personality Giada De Laurentiis, 43, was elegant in Carolina Herrera. Actress Joan Van Ark, 70, wore a Mark Zunino ensemble. Rock singer Joan Jett, 55,



Lindsey Vonn works the runway as a special guest of SUBWAY Restaurants at the Go Red For Women The Heart Truth Red Dress Collection 2014, made possible by Macy's and SUBWAY Restaurants, Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014, during Fashion Week in New York.

(Diane Bondareff/AP)



Victoria Justice, left, and AnnaSophia Robb attend the Heart Truth Red Dress Collection fashion show on Thursday, Feb. 6, 2014 in New York.

(Charles Sykes/AP)

wore a Catherine Malandrino pants outfit.

Victoria Justice, 20, best known for starring in the Nickelodeon TV series "Victorious," said it was her first experience on the runway (she got to wear Oscar de la Renta). Like many who participated, she has a personal connection to heart disease; her friend and stylist has suffered from it, and so she wanted to help bring awareness to fellow young women. "I'm young, but I know it's something you have to be on the lookout for," she said.

Actress AnnaSophia Robb, who ended the show in an Alice + Olivia strapless gown, is also only 20, but there's been heart disease in her family. And so she came, she said, "to be part of a community."

"It's important to be aware of your family's history, and to be cautious," she said. "I'm not worried now, but I know that I have to take this issue seriously." □